change your questions change your life workbook

MASTER YOUR MINDSET USING QUESTION THINKING

MARILEE ADAMS, PhD

BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *CHANGE YOUR QUESTIONS, CHANGE YOUR LIFE*

with ANDREA F. LIPTON

change your questions change your life

workbook

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MARILEE ADAMS, PhD

WITH ANDREA F. LIPTON

Berrett–Koehler Publishers, Inc.

Change Your Questions, Change Your Life Workbook

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Welcome to Your Change Journey!

Intentional change is a sign of courage.

Well, here we are. You're holding the *Change Your Questions, Change Your Life Workbook,* so, it's a safe guess that you're here, at least in part, because there's something in your life that you'd like to change. Perhaps you were excited by the possibility of learning to master your mindset, as the subtitle promises. Or maybe you were intrigued by the idea of Question Thinking™ and wanted to learn more.

Whatever led you to pick up this workbook, welcome! My name is Marilee Adams, and I created the Question Thinking (QT) tools that you'll be learning in this workbook. I'm thrilled that you've chosen to take this change journey and I'm excited for you to get started. As you progress through the activities on the pages that follow, I'll be your coach and guide. The skills you learn here will teach you new ways to become aware of your own thinking; that awareness will in turn give you greater control over your thoughts and reactions. You will also learn how to approach communication and relationships so that new possibilities for connection and collaboration naturally arise.

As your coach, I can promise that by engaging wholeheartedly with this workbook you will:

- Discover how changing your questions can change your life
- Learn how to use Question Thinking to master your mindset
- Increase your ability to remain calm, present, and strategic
- Enhance your ability to communicate successfully—even when you're frustrated or under pressure
- Become more effective at creatively collaborating and solving problems
- Apply what you learn to a personal or professional situation that you want to change—and see some progress!

How Did I Discover Question Thinking?

Many years ago when I was in graduate school, I was struggling to complete my dissertation. I was plagued with frustration and self-doubt. I felt like I was spinning my wheels in the mud and just couldn't get out. One day, out of desperation, I decided to just watch how I was thinking about my work, hoping that might provide clues about getting out of the awful rut I was in. Little did I know that what I discovered would lead to a major personal breakthrough, a whole body of work, and eventually to this workbook.

As I began observing myself, watching *how* I was thinking and not just *what* I was thinking, I realized that all the negativity that made me so unhappy was in the form of questions I was asking myself. They were questions such as: "What's wrong with me? Why can't I ever get anything right? What makes me think I have anything to offer? How come everybody else is so much smarter and more successful than I am? Why did my advisor wait so long to share this feedback? Didn't he know it would have been helpful to know this sooner?" Anyone who's spent much time trying to answer questions like these will recognize how stuck and frustrating that can feel.

What deflating questions like these do you ask yourself?

On that day when I sat observing my own thoughts, something very different occurred. I got curious about the I questions I was asking myself and the impact they were having on me and my dissertation work. I noticed that some of those thinking questions pushed me deeper in the mud and another kind of thinking question lifted me up and even helped me envision new possibilities. Some examples of the second kind of questions were: "What excites me about this topic? What will energize and inspire me? What resources do I have that can help me make this work? What have I learned from past struggles that I can use to be successful in this one?"

What expansive questions like these do you ask yourself?

What was different about those two sets of questions? I realized that the questions came from two distinct mindsets. Through careful observation I noted that the more uplifting and helpful questions had a positive impact on my experience and results. I began to practice this process of observing my thinking. Any time I noticed I was asking myself the deflating-type of question or otherwise feeling stuck, I intentionally asked myself an uplifting-type question. Over time, I became quite

skilled at observing myself. I found that thinking with the second set of questions activated more energy, hopefulness, and creativity in me. I used this discovery to redirect my own thinking, which enabled me to finish my dissertation—and I even received accolades for it!

Today I call the mindset that generates the uplifting questions "Learner Mindset" and the mindset that generates constricting questions "Judger Mindset." What's more, I realized that every human has both mindsets and always will, which means that both mindsets are normal for all of us. This workbook will help you learn to identify your own Learner Mindset and Judger Mindset and increase your ability to make intentional choices about how you respond to people and circumstances in your life. The method I developed for changing questions and mindsets I now call Question Thinking, or QT.

I first presented these ideas about Question Thinking for the general public in a book now entitled *Change Your Questions, Change Your Life: 12 Powerful Tools for Leadership, Coaching, and Results.* That book is a business fable, which became an international bestseller with hundreds of thousands of readers. That success has given me the opportunity to hear feedback from readers, workshop attendees, individuals I've coached, and organizational clients about the life-changing difference that QT Tools have made for them. Their feedback inspired me to create this workbook so that even more people could experience those same benefits, even if they haven't read the fable. It is my deepest desire that you'll experience the same wonderful results by engaging with this workbook!

New Futures Model

The reason this workbook and the original fable book are called *Change Your Questions, Change Your Life* is that when we change the questions we use to think with situations, people, or ourselves, we change the relationships we have and the results we get, which in turn changes our lives (see Figure 1).

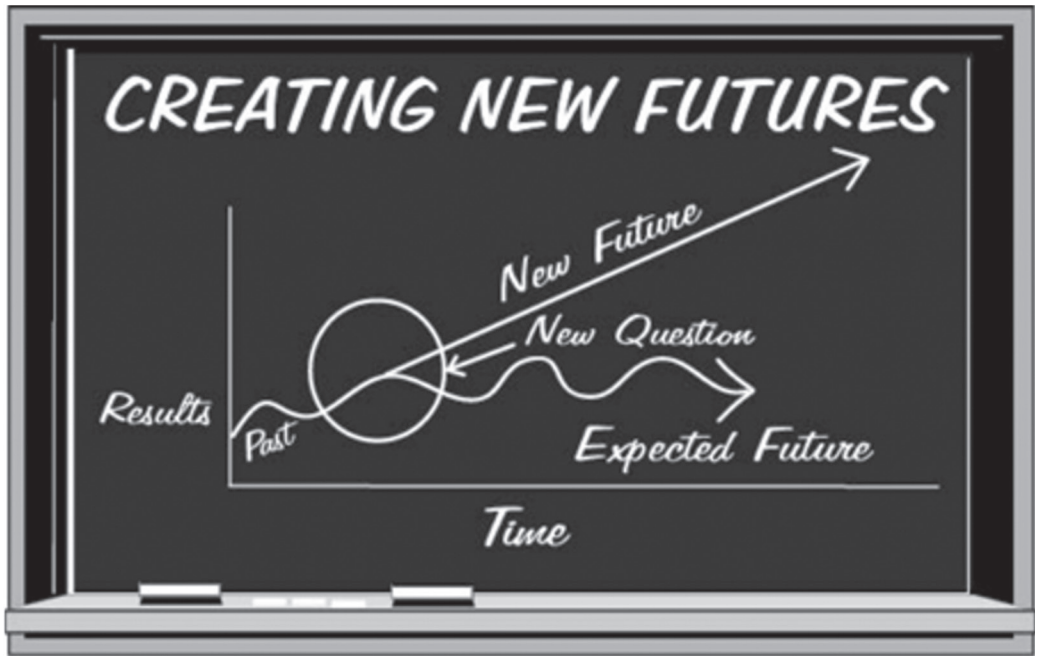

Figure 1: The New Futures Model

You can see from my example, that when I changed my questions, I changed the trajectory of my life. I went from being stuck, beating myself up about my dissertation, and at risk of not completing it, to finished with a successful end product. That means changing our questions not only changes our results but it can also help us create new futures.

The New Futures Model illustrates how the questions we ask impact our future. Asking the same questions keeps us on our current trajectory, while asking new questions opens new possibilities that can lead us in new directions.

About This Workbook

This workbook is a self-coaching companion to *Change Your Questions, Change Your Life: 12 Powerful Tools for Leadership, Coaching, and Results.* Some of you have read that book, some of you have not, and some of you read it a very long time ago. Happily, you do not need to have read the fable book to get the full value of this workbook. Everything you need to change your questions and change your life is in these pages!

The hero of the fable is named Ben, and this workbook is designed for you to experience a successful change journey that parallels Ben's. By learning Question Thinking, Ben becomes more capable and self-confident as he upgrades his skills as a leader with his team, and even creates a better relationship with his wife. Ben's journey will serve as an example for you as you move through this workbook, and you will see how he would navigate the various exercises to help bring them to life for you.

Introducing Ben

When we meet Ben in *Change Your Questions, Change Your Life: 12 Powerful Tools for Leadership, Coaching, and Results* he is about to resign from his job. Ben had been hired by Alexa, the CEO of QTec and a friend and former boss, to lead a team and project that is now on the verge of failing. All his career Ben had been the "Answer Man," known for his deep technical expertise and ability to solve tough problems. But now Ben is leading people, and he is failing at it.

It seems nobody on the team listens to Ben and their meetings just end up as frustrating dead ends. His biggest problem is with Charles, who had applied for the leadership position that Ben now holds. Communicating with Charles is going from bad to worse. In fact, Ben thinks Charles is trying to sabotage him and feels plagued by his incessant questions.

Just as dismaying, Ben's troubles at work are spilling over into his relationship with his wife, Grace. Tension between them is mounting. Finally, Ben decides that his only option for averting disaster at work and at home is to resign from QTec—but his boss, Alexa, disagrees. She refuses to accept his resignation and instead sends him to Joseph, a Question Thinking coach, who teaches Ben the tools you will learn here.

Remember, this is a workbook. You know there's *work* to do that will help you master your mindset so you can become more skillful in creating the changes you want in your own life. This workbook is very practical. It's set up so you can get tangible changes in a specific situation you're currently wrestling with. Along the way, you'll learn new perspectives and tools that you can use for the rest of your life.

This workbook is a six-part journey:

- **Chapter One** introduces the concept of mindset and asks you to choose a situation you are struggling with that involves another person, and that you would like to change.
- **Chapter Two** introduces you to the Choice Map™, the central tool of Question Thinking, and invites you to discover the connection between your questions and your mindset.
- **Chapter Three** examines how your Judger Mindset, the part of each of us that can be critical and judgmental, is impacting you, the other person, and the situation. I want you to know in advance that this is where the hard work takes place. I promise it will pay off in helping you master your mindset.
- **Chapter Four** explores how choosing to change your questions and, by extension, your mindset, can help you create the experiences, relationships, and results you want in your life.
- **Chapter Five** teaches Q-Prep, a tool I use all the time, to have conversations from your Learner Mindset, the part of each of us that embraces curiosity and possibility, and you can use it to apply what you are learning in this workbook directly to the challenging situation you're focusing on.
- **Chapter Six** ends with you envisioning how to keep cultivating Learner Mindset so you can minimize the time you spend in Judger and the impact that mindset has on you, your results, and your life. This is where Learning Living comes in.

Let's get started!

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CHAPTER ONE

What Do You Want to Change?

Intentional change typically involves changing mindsets, so that is where we will begin.

What Is a Mindset?

Since you picked up this workbook to master your mindset, I think it's important to begin by defining a mindset.

Mindset is more than an attitude; it's the place from which we operate in any given moment. It's a way of being that influences how we think and feel, what we do, and how we relate to others and to ourselves. Mindset is always affecting our moods, experiences, behaviors, and results, and it has an impact in both our personal and professional lives.

Mindset represents the beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and possibilities we hold about ourselves, others, and the world. Our mindset is not static and can change unconsciously from moment to moment. Learning to master our mindset means we can choose to change it intentionally.

Mindset is not static; our mindset can change from moment to moment, often as an unconscious reaction. We react to our circumstances, to our interactions with others, and even to what is happening inside us—our thoughts and feelings. Keep in mind, feelings can be either emotional or physical, which means mindset also has a somatic or bodily aspect to it. Our mindsets are not just in our heads.

What Does It Mean to Master Your Mindset?

We can change our mindset consciously and intentionally, which is what I mean when I talk about "mastering your mindset." To do this, we must first learn to notice what mindset we are in. We do this by observing our experiences: how we react to people, situations, our own thoughts, or any form of internal or external stimuli. Mastering our mindset requires us first to learn to notice, then to slow down our automatic reactions.

Throughout the workbook, I'll be asking you to pause regularly to reflect on the new material you are learning. Use these minibreaks to pause and jot down a few reflections on what you've just read.

LEARNER REFLECTION

What thoughts or feelings do I have about interrupting my automatic reactions? What questions do I have about this idea? What implications might this have for me?

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When I was feeling stuck writing my dissertation, I paused to observe both *what* I was thinking and *how* I was thinking about my situation and myself. This process of observation was what allowed me to notice the mindset I was in and that it was related to the questions I was asking. Once I noticed my mindset, I was able to change it—to choose my questions instead of reacting automatically and unconsciously.

Once we are aware of the mindset we are in, we have choice about whether to continue operating from that mindset or to Switch to a different mindset (Figure 2). Awareness is key. The more aware we are of our mindsets, the more easily we become able to change them. In

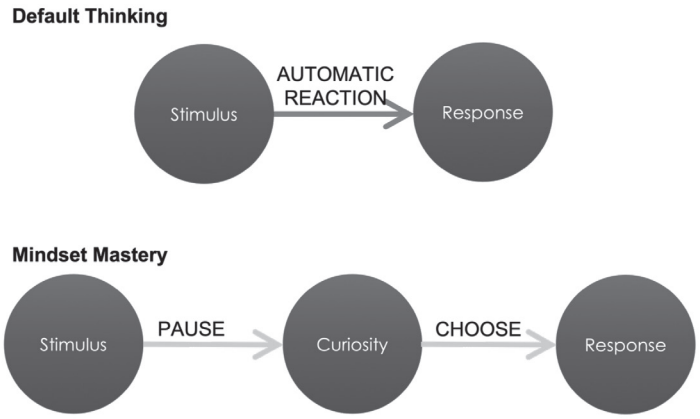

Figure 2: Default Thinking vs. Mindset Mastery

Chapter 2, we'll explore two specific mindsets that we all share, called Learner and Judger.

Mastering our mindset begins with awareness.

But first, let's practice noticing our mindset by thinking about the people you know and the things they say and do that you find annoying. Yes, that's right, we are going to think about the people we know—family, friends, colleagues, neighbors, community members—who regularly say and do things that get on our nerves.

What Gets on Your Nerves? Your Mindset Challenge

Think of some people in your life who behave in ways that bother you. When I say bother, I mean these people repeatedly say or do things that get on your nerves. You notice it, you don't like it, and you feel uncomfortable, frustrated, or even fed up when it happens. However, it's not a high stakes situation. Their behavior is not a relationship dealbreaker even though it gets under your skin. This annoying situation should be one that is specific to this particular person.

For example, what annoys you could be the fact that time after time your spouse or partner doesn't replace the toilet paper when the roll is empty; your child says they are going to load the dishwasher after dinner but never does; your coworker frequently complains about their workload; or your neighbor does not pick up after their dog and leaves the mess on your lawn for you to clean up.

Pick someone or something that you find yourself reacting to. It can be purely internal, like negative commentary about the person and their behavior that runs through your mind, or it could be an external reaction like making a face, rolling your eyes, sighing loudly, crossing your arms, or making a snide comment.

To help you think about your list of people-specific irritations, let's look at Ben's list.

Ben's Mindset Challenge:
Ben's List of Annoying People and Situations

Person *(list their name and your relationship)*	**Behavior I find annoying** *(describe what they say/do that bothers you)*	**How I react** *(describe what you think, feel, say, and do)*
Charles (my employee)	Charles asks so many questions in meetings it feels like he challenges everything and slows down our progress.	I know I complain about Charles in my head. I think sometimes when he asks a question I sigh out loud. Once I rolled my eyes.
Grace (my wife)	Grace calls me when I'm at the office and complains about her workday as if I am not busy with mine.	I get a sharp tone of voice with Grace and sometimes tell her I am too busy to talk. (Which I am!)
Drivers who don't use their turn signals	These people act like they are the only ones on the road and cut people off, which could cause an accident.	I honk. I curse. When I am alone in the car sometimes I yell at them as if they can hear me.
Me (Ben)	I am so frustrated with myself that I can't seem to figure out why the team is stuck. I usually am the "Answer Man" but I don't have the answers at this new job.	When I am alone, I shake my head in frustration and exasperation. I tell myself it was a mistake to leave my old job.

Your Mindset Challenge: What Annoys You

Now think of some people in your life who, over and over, say or do things that get on your nerves. Write down their names, what they repeatedly say or do that bothers you, and how you react.

Person *(list their name and your relationship)*	**Behavior I find annoying** *(describe what they say/do that bothers you)*	**How I react** *(describe what you think, feel, say, and do)*

Your Mindset Challenge

In this workbook, you'll practice mastering your mindset by completing a Mindset Challenge, which focuses on one of the people you listed and the behavior they engage in that you find annoying. You'll learn how to change how you react when faced with this situation.

If completing this last exercise left you feeling drained or bad about yourself, take a deep breath and give yourself a break. Having negative thoughts about ourselves, others, and the world is normal and human. And that judgmental inner voice I've referenced can actually be a teacher if we let it. It can show us what we care about and when we are out of alignment with who we want to be.

Before you choose who and what to focus on, look at your list and ask yourself the following questions:

- Who on this list matters the most to me?
- Which of these people have I had conflicts with because of how I've reacted to their annoying behavior?
- Which of these relationships/situations would benefit the most if I could respond differently?
- Which of my reactions would I benefit the most from changing—not just with this person but with other people and in all the places it shows up?

Based on your answers to these questions, circle two people and their behaviors that would be most valuable for you to work on. Please don't start with a highly charged, intense situation. You'll want to choose something important enough to provide motivation that will keep you progressing through this workbook even when it feels hard, but your relationship should not be at a crisis point. Ideally, your relationship with the person you select would have an existing foundation on which to build, despite the behavior that gets on your nerves.

To get the most out of this workbook, you want to practice mastering your mindset in relationship to an actual person in your life. That means you should not choose a group of people—like drivers who don't use their turn signals on Ben's list.

While we absolutely do have relationships with ourselves, and these skills can be applied to how you interact with yourself, the exercises in this workbook are designed for a situation involving another person. You'll learn to master your mindset more effectively when you are getting the benefit of feedback from the other person. When I say "feedback from the other person" I do not mean that you will need to ask that person to give you input. But what will almost certainly happen is that your interactions with each other will change as you practice and apply Question Thinking, and that will provide useful feedback on the inner work you are doing.

LEARNER REFLECTION

What thoughts or feelings do I have about this Mindset Challenge? What questions do I have about doing this? What implications might this have for me?

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For his Mindset Challenge, Ben chooses to focus on changing his reaction to Charles, the colleague he thinks asks too many questions. Also, while he doesn't explicitly work on his relationship with Grace, Ben does see improvements in his marriage. The beauty of learning to master our mindsets with Question Thinking is that as we get skilled at using the tools in one part of our lives, the other parts usually benefit, too.

With all this coaching in mind, return to your list and choose the one person you'd like to focus on and the behavior that person engages in that you react to negatively. This will be your Mindset Challenge and the primary focus for the exercises in this workbook.

Why Do You Care about Changing?

Remember how I said to choose a person and situation you care enough about to keep you motivated when the exercises feel hard? Well now is your opportunity to connect with why changing your reaction to this person and their behavior matters to you.

Before you write down your answers, let's look at what Ben would say about why he wants to change his reaction to Charles.

Ben's Mindset Challenge: Why Ben Cares about Changing

Who is this person to me? Why does this relationship matter?

Charles is my direct report. He was in line to get the job I have leading the team. I work with him every day and he is an important member of this project team. If I don't improve my working relationship with him, our project will almost certainly fail.

What do they keep doing that I find annoying? (Give yourself permission to complain and be specific!)

Charles asks so many questions. In meetings that's all he does. He challenges everything I say with questions, questions, and more questions. Sometimes I think he wants to sabotage me with all his questions.

When they behave in this way, how do I react? What do I think, feel, say, and do? (Consider faces you make, how you breathe, your tone of voice, whether you get upset or shut down, etc. Be specific about your reactions; awareness is key.)

When Charles opens his mouth to ask a question, I can feel my body getting tense. I clench my teeth and I just know what he is about to say is going to upset me. When I answer his questions, I can hear the intensity in my tone of voice. Other times, I just ignore his questions because it's all I can do to stop myself from getting angry.

Why does it matter to me to change how I react to this person and their behavior?

The project Charles and I are working on is behind schedule, and we need to work together to be successful. All his questions and my frustration about them are getting in the way.

If I don't change how I react to this person and their behavior, what will it cost me? (For example, it might cost you a friendship or a promotion or it might simply keep draining you of joy or feeling successful at home or work.)

If Charles and I keep interacting the way we are, this project will fail and that will be bad for all of us and the company.

Your Mindset Challenge: Why You Care about Changing

Think of the person you chose to focus on and the annoying thing they regularly say/do as you answer the following questions:

Who is this person to me? Why does this relationship matter?

What do they keep doing or saying that I find annoying? (Give yourself permission to complain and be specific!)

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When they behave in this way, how do I react? What do I think, feel, say, and do? (Consider faces you make, how you breathe, your tone of voice, whether you get upset or shut down, etc. Be specific about your reactions; those details will serve you later.)

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Why does it matter to me to change how I react to this person and their behavior?

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If I don't change how I react to this person and their behavior, what will it cost me? (For example, it might cost you a friendship or a promotion or it might simply keep draining you of joy or feeling successful at home or work.)

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What Mindset Are You In? A Mindset Check-In

Now that you've identified the annoying person and situation you would like to focus on and explored why it is important to you, it's time to Check-In on how you are relating to yourself and the other person.

Instructions: Read each statement. If you ever think, say, feel, or do that thing in reaction to this person and their behavior, circle "Yes." If not, circle "No."

Mindset Check-In: Part 1

In this situation when I am upset with or disagree with ***THE OTHER PERSON****...*

1.	I withdraw in silence	Yes	No
2.	I stand my ground and argue my point	Yes	No
3.	I avoid the person or situation altogether	Yes	No
4.	I think about the mistakes the person has made in the past	Yes	No
5.	I ask myself, "How could ***they*** be so stupid?"	Yes	No
6.	I ask myself, "What the heck is wrong with ***them?***"	Yes	No
7.	I feel frustrated	Yes	No
8.	I feel tense and stressed out	Yes	No
9.	I feel disengaged and alone	Yes	No
	Part 1: How many times did you circle each response? Enter the number in the box		

Mindset Check-In: Part 2

In this situation when I am upset with or disagree with ***THE OTHER PERSON****...*

10.	I pause and take a deep breath	Yes	No
11.	I ask the other person questions so I can understand what they are concerned about	Yes	No
12.	I point out where we agree rather than just where we disagree	Yes	No
13.	I ask myself, "What am **I** missing or assuming?"	Yes	No
14.	I ask myself, "How do **they** see the situation differently than I do?"	Yes	No
15.	I remind myself they are human and make mistakes, too	Yes	No
16.	I feel accepting of how they see the situation–even if I disagree or don't like their perspective	Yes	No
17.	I still care about the other person even though we may disagree	Yes	No
18.	I care whether they feel respected and heard despite our differences or any disagreements	Yes	No
	Part 2: How many times did you circle each response? Enter the number in the box		

Mindset Check-In: Part 3

*In this situation when I am upset with or disagree with **MYSELF**...*

19.	I procrastinate or avoid thinking about or working on the issue	Yes	No
20.	I ignore or deny being upset with myself and keep working anyway	Yes	No
21.	I get stuck and struggle to move forward	Yes	No
22.	I think about all the other mistakes I have made in the past	Yes	No
23.	I ask myself, "How could **I** be so stupid?"	Yes	No
24.	I ask myself, "What the heck is wrong with **me**?"	Yes	No
25.	I feel frustrated and angry with myself	Yes	No
26.	I feel disappointed in myself	Yes	No
27.	I feel sad that I am in this situation	Yes	No
	Part 3: How many times did you circle each response? Enter the number in the box		

Mindset Check-In: Part 4

In this situation when I am upset with or disagree with ***MYSELF****...*

28.	I pause and take a deep breath or use some other technique to calm/soothe myself	Yes	No
29.	I ask myself, "What is really going on with me?"	Yes	No
30.	I do something to take care of myself like take a walk, stretch, get a drink of water, take a break	Yes	No
31.	I remind myself I'm human and it's okay/ normal to make mistakes	Yes	No
32.	I wonder what I can learn from this	Yes	No
33.	I remind myself that this, too, shall pass	Yes	No
34.	I feel compassion for myself despite having made a mistake or done something wrong	Yes	No
35.	I accept myself regardless of what I have said or done	Yes	No
36.	I accept what I'm feeling, no matter what I'm feeling	Yes	No
	Part 4: How many times did you circle each response? Enter the number in the box		

Mindset Check-In: Tabulate Your Answers

Fill in the tables that follow as instructed to create a snapshot of the mindsets you are in relative to this situation, the other person involved, and yourself.

	Judger Mindset	**Learner Mindset**
Toward OTHER	Part 1 YES answers _____	Part 2 YES answers _____
Toward SELF	Part 3 YES answers _____	Part 4 YES answers _____
TOTAL MINDSET IN THIS SITUATION	Judger toward SELF + Judger toward OTHER _____	Learner toward SELF + Learner toward OTHER _____

We will explore Learner Mindset and Judget Mindset and what your results mean on the pages that follow.

What Are Learner Mindset and Judger Mindset?

Congratulations! You just observed your own mindsets. By answering these questions, you have experienced what it is like to notice yourself in one of the two mindsets that all humans possess: Learner and Judger. Let's look briefly at each mindset.

Learner Mindset is characterized by curiosity, flexibility, open-mindedness, and appreciation–all encoded in a set of beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and possibilities we hold about ourselves, others, and the world. ***Everyone*** has a Learner Mindset.

Judger Mindset is characterized by the desire to be right, in control, safe, and certain. It stems in part, from our hardwiring for survival. Judger mindset is frequently critical and judgmental of both self and others–all encoded in a set of beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and possibilities we hold about ourselves, others, and the world. ***Everyone*** has a Judger mindset.

Judger Mindset produces the constricting set of questions I was asking myself when I was struggling to write my dissertation; Learner Mindset produces the more expansive, energizing questions I taught myself to ask whenever I noticed a Judger Mindset question.

Both mndsets can be directed inward toward ourselves, like I was doing about my dissertation, or outward toward other people and circumstances in the world. Ben exemplified external-facing Judger when encountering drivers who don't use their turn signals. (Confession: I have Judger thoughts and sometimes make Judger comments toward people who park on the line in parking lots.)

It's important to remember that we all have both a Learner Mindset and a Judger Mindset—and always will. That's because both mindsets are just normal parts of being human.

Look back at your Mindset Check-In scores. The highest you can score for either mindset is 18: nine toward self and nine toward other.

Don't focus on whether you scored high or low for either Learner Mindset or Judger Mindset. Your scores are simply an indication, in this specific situation, of how often you notice yourself engaged in Judger or Learner behaviors. This is the beginning of raising your mindset awareness about thoughts or feelings toward yourself or the other person when faced with their annoying behavior.

A high score on either mindset does not make you a Learner person or a Judger person because there are no Learner or Judger people, no matter how it may seem. We all have both mindsets and always will. A high score does suggest that you *frequently notice yourself in that mindset* when you're in this situation. Similarly, a low score on either mindset does not mean you lack the ability to be in Learner Mindset or be in Judger Mindset. It just suggests that you either don't think, feel, or behave in ways commonly associated with that mindset *or are not aware that you do.*

LEARNER REFLECTION

What thoughts or feelings do I have about realizing that I have these two mindsets and always will? What questions do I have about this idea? What implications might this have for me?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

No one can ever be all Learner or all Judger about any person or situation because we always have both mindsets. We can only be in either Learner Mindset or in Judger Mindset at any given moment. Even if the amount of time spent in one mindset makes it feel like you are all "Judger" or all "Learner" in reality, it is always possible to access both mindsets. The key question to ask yourself is whether the balance of time you spend in each mindset is supporting you in creating the relationships and results you want.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Let's take a closer look at Learner and Judger Mindsets.

As you read the following descriptions of each mindset, consider the person, the behavior you find annoying, and how you tend to react to that behavior. Circle the words that best reflect how you are thinking, feeling, and behaving toward yourself, your circumstances, and the other person involved in your Mindset Challenge.

Judger Attributes

When in Judger mindset, we can often be...

- Closed-minded
- Certain
- Critical
- Judgmental
- Inflexible
- Isolated
- Problem-focused
- Blame-focused
- Past-focused and fear-based

Judger Relating

When in Judger mindset, we may relate to others (or ourselves) in ways that are...

- Win / lose
- Dismissive, demeaning
- Separate
- Destructive when in conflict
- Likely to go on the attack or be defensive

Judger Listening

When we listen with "Judger ears," we tend to...

- Focus on areas of disagreement or what's not working
- Hear things we disapprove of
- Notice what we dislike
- Fear it is "me versus them"
- Look for threats to self
- Make assumptions–and not question or test them

Learner Attributes

When in Learner mindset, we can often be...

- Open-minded
- Curious and creative
- Appreciative
- Accepting
- Flexible
- Collaborative
- Solution-focused
- Responsibility-focused
- Future-focused and possibility-focused

Learner Relating

When in Learner mindset, we may relate to others (or ourselves) in ways that are...

- Win / win
- Discerning, accepting
- Connected
- Constructive when in conflict
- Likely to appreciate, resolve, or create

Learner Listening

When we listen with "Learner ears," we tend to...

- Focus on areas of agreement and what IS working
- Hear things we approve of
- Notice what we like
- Attempt to understand
- Assume positive intention–even if we disagree/dislike the message
- Look for the value in what is being shared

What Am I Noticing?

Let's take a moment now to reflect on what you are noticing about the balance of your mindsets regarding the annoying person or situation chosen for your Mindset Challenge.

Your Mindset Challenge: Things You Are Noticing about Your Mindsets

Think of your situation as you answer the following questions:

What does the score I received for Judger Mindset toward others suggest about how I am thinking, feeling, behaving, and relating to this person and their behavior?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What does the score I received for Judger Mindset toward myself suggest about how I am thinking, feeling, behaving, and relating to myself when this person behaves this way?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What does the score I received for Learner Mindset toward others suggest about how I am thinking, feeling, behaving, and relating to this person and their behavior?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What does the score I received for Learner Mindset toward myself suggest about how I am thinking, feeling, behaving, and relating to myself when this person behaves this way?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

If you discovered a lot of Judger, remember it's okay to be human! Don't despair!

If you discovered that you are often in Judger Mindset or seldom in Learner Mindset, remember, it's just information in this situation. Your answers are a snapshot of a moment in time, and you have the power to choose and to change. The purpose of this workbook is to help you shift the balance of time to favor Learner Mindset so you can create a new future.

Keep going!

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CHAPTER TWO

What Is the Choice Map?

The Choice Map illustrates Learner and Judger Mindsets and how important Question Thinking is in helping us make changes that we want.

The Choice Map

Mastering your mindset is all about choosing which mindset to be in or stay in.

On the following pages you will get acquainted with the Choice Map, the central tool of Question Thinking.

The **Choice Map** is a self-awareness and self-coaching tool that illustrates the two mindsets we all have: Learner and Judger. It helps us determine what mindset we are in at any given moment. That enables us to map where our current mindset will likely take us, which can help us choose whether to proceed on our current path or Switch mindsets and travel a different route.

When you turn the page, give yourself at least a minute or two to look closely at the Choice Map and notice what you observe.

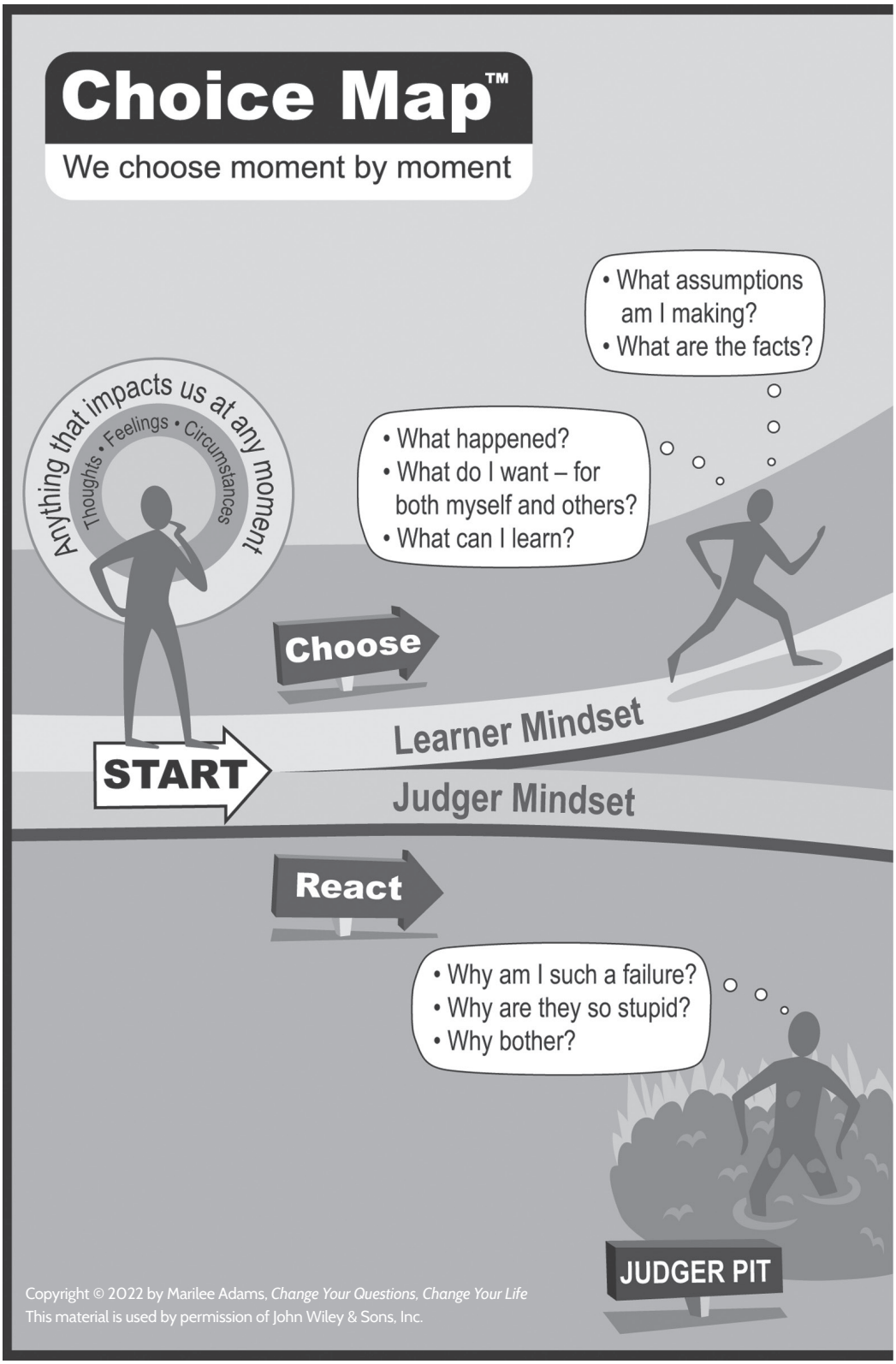
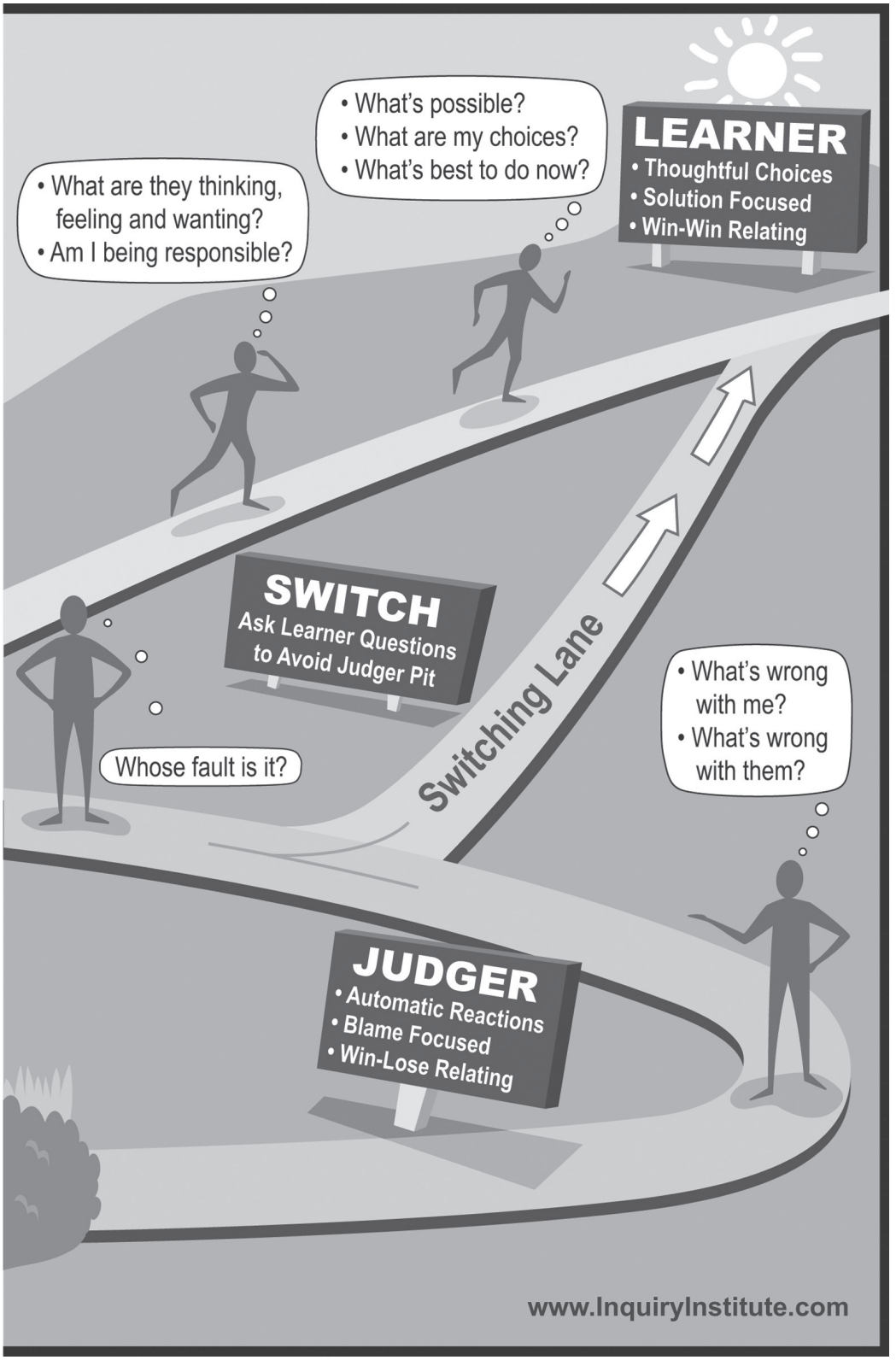


Figure 3: The Choice Map


• What's possible?
• What are my choices?
• What's best to do now?
LEARNER
• Thoughtful Choices
• Solution Focused
• Win-Win Relating
• What are they thinking, feeling and wanting?
• Am I being responsible?
SWITCH
Ask Learner Questions to Avoid Judger Pit
Switching Lane
Whose fault is it?
• What's wrong with me?
• What's wrong with them?
JUDGER
• Automatic Reactions
• Blame Focused
• Win-Lose Relating
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Choice Map Reflections

Many of you have just seen the Choice Map for the first time. I've introduced the Choice Map to many thousands of people, and I've seen a wide variety of responses. Probably some of those responses are true for you too.

Many people say things like, "Oh wow, that's why my relationship with {person} is so strained!" Some look at the Learner Mindset path and know they want to live there. Others look at the Judger Pit and worry that they live only there. And some recognize the Switching Lane as the "how to" for getting out of the Judger Pit and back up to Learner territory. The banner at the top says, "We choose moment by moment." Many people recognize that the Choice Map is showing them that they get to choose which path to take in any given moment.

Please use the space below to reflect on your first thoughts and impressions about the Choice Map. In what ways might it be useful for you, both at work and at home? What stands out to you?

What Is the Relationship between Mindset and Questions?

As you can see illustrated on the Choice Map, we ask ourselves distinctly different questions when we are on the Learner path in contrast with when we are on the Judger path. That points to how our mindsets are encoded in our questions.

Turn back to the Choice Map and read out loud all the questions on the Judger path. As you read, ask yourself, "How do these Judger questions make me feel when I read them?" Note what you experience in the space provided below.

What did I experience when I read the Judger questions out loud? Take note of your thoughts, and also your breathing, feelings, and sensation in your body.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Next, read out loud all the questions on the Learner path, while asking yourself, "How do these Learner questions make me feel when I read them?" Note what you experience in the space provided below.

What did I experience when I read the Learner questions out loud? Take note of your thoughts, and also your breathing, feelings, and the sensation in your body.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Great work!

The simple exercise of observing how you felt—both emotionally and physically—while reading Judger and Learner questions out loud is key to the foundation of mindset mastery: building awareness of the impact of each mindset.

What Is Question Thinking?

Question Thinking describes how we think with questions and, when utilized intentionally, is a method of purposeful and skillful question asking that improves the quality and results of the questions we ask ourselves and others.

You may have noticed that the thought bubbles on the Choice Map are all filled with questions. That's because we think with questions. The mindset we are in at any given moment determines the kinds of questions we think with. I remember what an "ah ha" it was for me to realize we think with questions!

Let's look at how Question Thinking operates by exploring how you decided to wear the clothes you have on right now.

How Did You Decide What to Wear Today?

Look at what you're wearing right now. Which of the following things did you consider when you got dressed? Check all that apply.

- ☐ **Weather:** How hot/cold will it be? Will it rain?
- ☐ **Activities:** What will I be doing today? Who will I be seeing? Where will I be going?
- ☐ **Comfort:** What will I be comfortable in for all my plans for the day?
- ☐ **Appropriateness:** Will I be over/under-dressed? What are others likely wearing?
- ☐ **Appearance:** How do I look in this outfit? Is it clean?
- ☐ **Other Considerations:** Write down any additional questions you asked yourself.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

NOTICE that you are wearing the answers to your questions!

What Questions Have You Been Thinking With?

Notice on the Choice Map how distinctly different the questions on the Judger Mindset path are from those on the Learner Mindset path. The Judger Mindset questions are the negative questions I noticed myself thinking with when I was stuck writing my dissertation. The Learner Mindset path questions are the ones I taught myself to think with whenever I realized I was in Judger Mindset about myself, my advisor, and my situation.

Before we can change our situation—or master our mindsets—we must observe the questions we have been thinking with when we react.

Let's look at the questions Ben was thinking with about Charles and all his questions before turning our attention back to you and your Mindset Challenge.

Ben's Mindset Challenge: Questions Ben Thinks With

What questions have I been asking myself about the other person?

Why does Charles ask so many questions?

Why is Charles trying to sabotage me with all his questions?

Why does Charles always challenge me in meetings?

Why can't Charles get with the program and just listen?

Who the heck does Charles think he is?

What questions have I been asking myself about the other person's behavior and the surrounding circumstances?

How are all Charles' questions going to help us make this project work?

What questions have I been asking myself about myself in this situation?

Why don't I have the answers to these questions?

Why did I take this job in the first place?

What happened to being the "Answer Man"? Why can't I find the answers I need?

What if I'm a terrible leader?

What if I fail at this job?

What will my wife think of me?

Your Mindset Challenge: Questions You Think With

Now that you can see how our lives are affected by the questions we ask ourselves, it's time to consider how that plays out in the way you interact with the person and behavior you chose to work on as your Mindset Challenge in chapter 1.

*What questions have I been asking myself about **the other person**?*

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

*What questions have I been asking myself about **the other person's behavior** in this situation?*

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

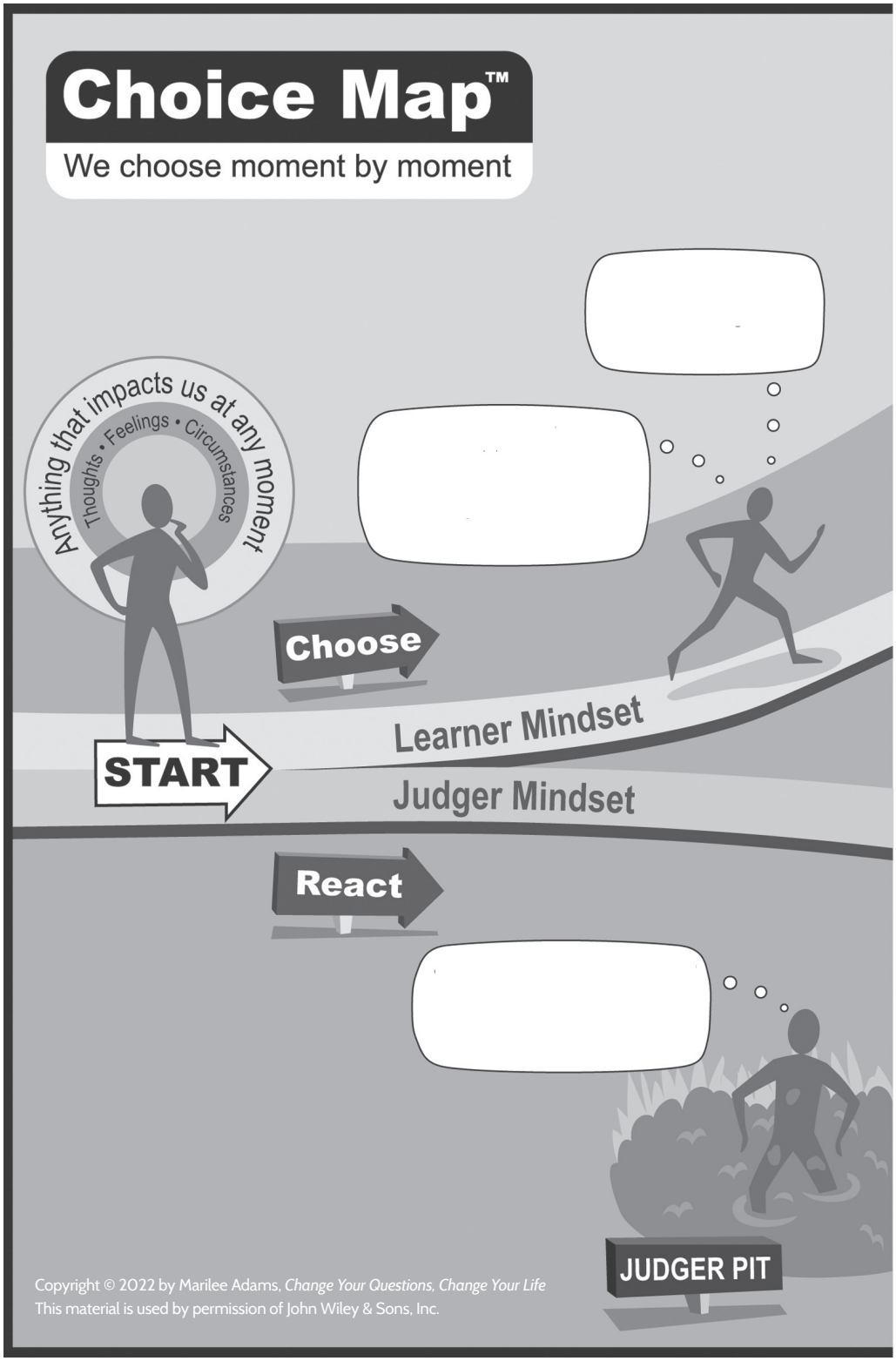
*What questions have I been asking myself about **myself** in this situation?*

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

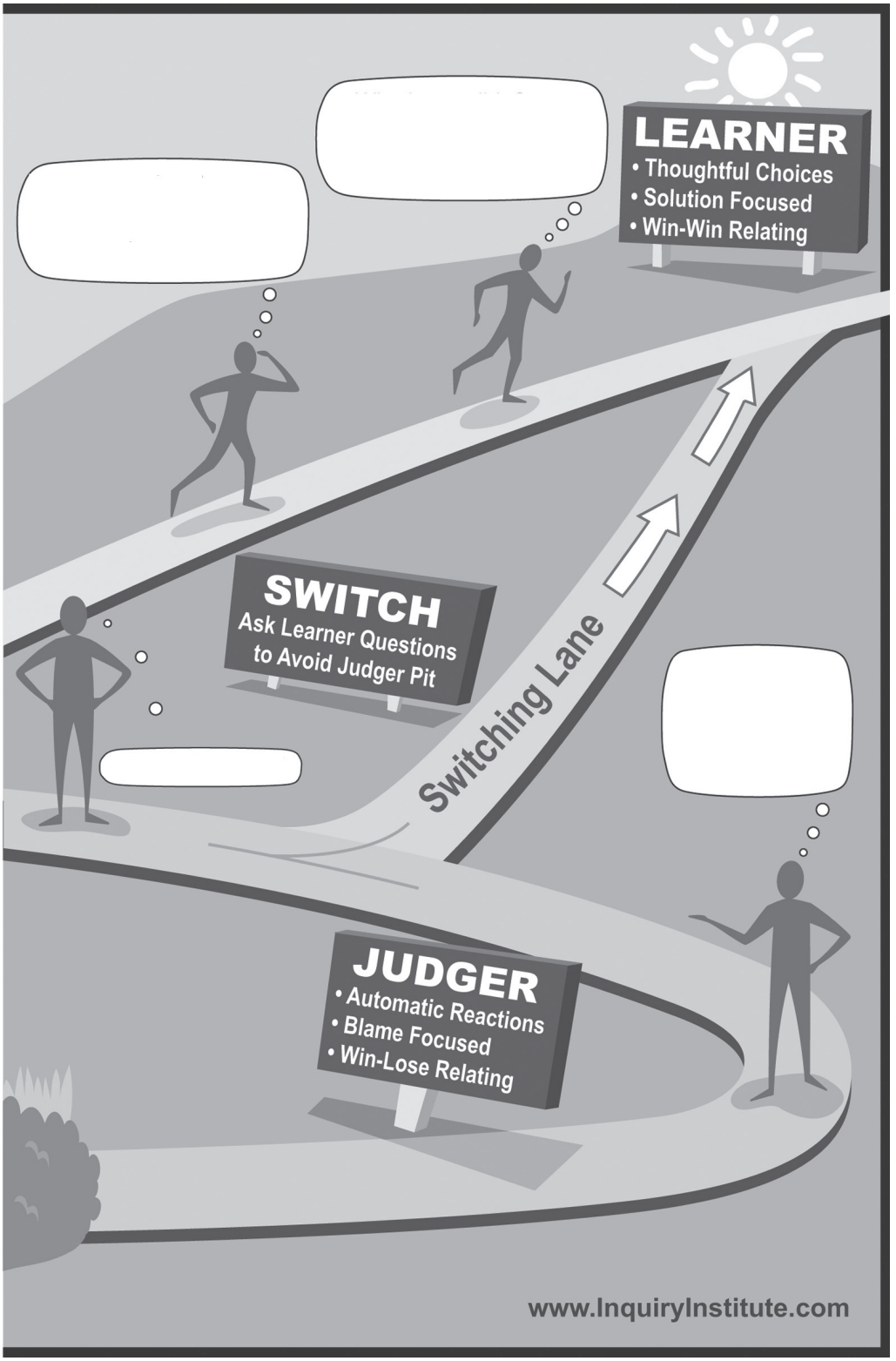
Review the list of questions that you just wrote. This time, place a "J" next to any questions that reflect your Judger Mindset and an "L" next to any questions that reflect your Learner Mindset about the other person, their behavior, the circumstance, and yourself. Next, go back to the introduction and review the very first set of "deflating" questions you wrote in the How Did I Discover Question Thinking? section. These were Judger Mindset questions. Then review the second list of "expansive" questions you wrote there. These were Learner Mindset questions.

Your Mindset Challenge: Create Your Personal Choice Map

On the next two pages there is a blank Choice Map for you to fill in with the questions you are thinking with about your Mindset Challenge (Figure 4). Write your Learner questions from the How Did I Discover Question Thinking? section of the introduction, and from Your Mindset Challenge: Questions You Think With from earlier in this chapter, in the thought bubbles on the Learner path and your Judger questions from these same locations in the thought bubbles on the Judger path.



42 **Figure 4:** My Choice Map #1


LEARNER
• Thoughtful Choices
• Solution Focused
• Win-Win Relating
SWITCH
Ask Learner Questions
to Avoid Judger Pit
Switching Lane
JUDGER
• Automatic Reactions
• Blame Focused
• Win-Lose Relating
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Now you have a personal map of your mindset questions as they relate to your Mindset Challenge. Use this Choice Map to help you navigate your mindsets as you move through this workbook. At the end of the workbook, you will have another blank Choice Map to complete. Once you've completed the workbook, you may find yourself noticing new questions in the terrain of your mind. You can fill a second Choice Map with your own questions.

CHAPTER THREE

How Can Making Friends with Judger Help You Master Your Mindset?

Making friends with Judger strengthens Learner!

Judger Mindset Is Normal– It's Part of Being Human

We all have Judger Mindset, and we always will. It is part of being human. Since Judger is part of the hardwiring of our brains, we cannot eliminate it, nor would we want to, given the critical role it plays in our survival. However, we certainly can manage and minimize the impact Judger has on our lives in both our daily experiences and moment-by-moment reactions. That is the work of mastering your mindset using Question Thinking.

Since living primarily in Learner is the goal, you might wonder why I think it's so important to explore, understand, and make friends with Judger. It's simple, really: you're a whole person and so am I. The fullness of our humanity includes everything. Some people want to avoid thinking about Judger because they don't like that aspect of themselves. I totally get that! Paradoxically, the more you understand and make friends with your Judger, the more freedom and possibility you'll have in your life.

In this chapter, you will have the opportunity to examine your Judger Mindset reactions as they relate to your Mindset Challenge so you can learn from them. Increasing your awareness of Judger—both toward yourself and toward others—is the first step to mindset mastery. I call this a "Learner practice." When we look at our Judger with curiosity, we are standing on the Learner path of the Choice Map and reflecting on what triggers us to go Judger and how we think, feel, and behave when we are on the Judger path.

Judger Mindset and making a judgment are not the same!

- Judger Mindset always refers to an attitude of being critical and judgmental toward ourselves and others.
- Sound judgment is made with attention to logic and facts rather than limited to only emotions, opinions, and biases. We need to be able to make sound judgments in both our personal and professional lives.

If you're like me and most of the people I have coached and trained over the years, you've experienced lots of "Judger hijacks" in your life. That's when someone says or does something that triggers a Judger reaction, one that is out of proportion to what actually happened. Typically, some events in our past have set us up for this kind of reactiveness, which can really get in the way of our relationships, happiness, and results. Perhaps at some point in the past you have overreacted in the situation you are working on. Maybe that's why you chose to work on this relationship and behavior.

If you have experienced a "Judger hijack" take heart. We all have! Exploring your Judger history will help you understand why the thing this particular person says or does triggers a Judger reaction in you. That's why it's so useful to explore our own Judger histories, which is what you'll get to do next.

What Is My History with Judger?

Every human being has a Judger Mindset. And every human has their own deeply personal list of things—people, behaviors, ideas, words, sounds, smells, etc.—that trigger a Judger reaction. In this exercise, you get to explore Judger throughout your life so you can begin to understand how your Judger works. It's much easier to make friends with something when you understand it.

LEARNER REFLECTION

What thoughts or feelings do I have about getting caught in a "Judger hijack"? What questions do I have about this idea? What implications might this have for me?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Before it's your turn, let's hear from Ben about his Judger history.

Ben's Mindset Challenge: Ben's Judger History

When is the first time I can remember encountering Judger Mindset? What had happened? Was I the person reacting from Judger or was it someone else?

The first memory I have of Judger Mindset was my father getting angry at my mother because he asked her a question and she didn't know the answer. I was so young I don't even remember the details of why he was mad, I just remember how loud he talked and how big he seemed. My mother's face got red and she got really quiet.

When this happened, what did my Judger Mindset say to me about myself?

I remember I vowed to myself I would always know the answers—or at least never admit that I didn't know. I realize that's probably what set me on the road to being the "Answer Man."

When this happened, what did my Judger Mindset say to me about other people and/or about life?

My Judger Mindset told me people only care about you when you have the answers they want and that not knowing is risky and unsafe and looks bad.

Now, as an adult, what situations, behaviors, words, or people tend to trigger my Judger reaction and what do I think, say, or do—or not say or do—when I "go Judger"?

I tend to get angry when either I or another person doesn't know something or should know but doesn't. It drives me crazy when people don't use their turn signals or merge correctly because my Judger says they should know better.

My Judger has me hide out when I don't have the answers, or sometimes I want to throw my hands up and quit. I try to solve problems, and I get triggered when other people don't. I go Judger on others, but as angry as I can get at Charles or my wife Grace, that is nothing compared to how angry I get at myself. I hate it when I don't know how to solve a problem or find the answer.

What emotions and body sensations do I typically associate with my experience of Judger (when I'm being Judger with myself and with others)?

When I go Judger I get mad. I can be mean. I talk in a sharp tone of voice, or I interrupt people and cut them off. My Judger is not at all subtle! My Judger is loud and, I am sad to say, proud.

The other day when I felt myself go Judger on Charles, I could feel my fingers curling into fists. I felt tense and like I wanted to punch him.

What Judger beliefs have I developed about myself and what does Judger say to me about myself?

My Judger believes I am worthless unless I have the answers and can solve problems. My Judger thinks it's my answers that make me worthy of love and that if I don't have the answers, Grace won't respect me or want to be with me anymore.

What Judger beliefs do I now hold about other people (or "types" of people) and life in general? How do they affect and limit my life?

I have the Judger belief that people who ask a lot of questions aren't smart and aren't contributing to the solution. While having answers has served me in the past, I can see that thinking it's not smart to ask questions is getting in the way of being a good leader and husband. Ugh.

Reflecting on what I've just written, what observations do I have about Judger and the impact it has had on me? What beliefs and patterns do I associate with Judger Mindset?

All these years I thought being the "Answer Man" was all that was important...now I'm not so sure and that makes me feel really uncomfortable.

Your Mindset Challenge: Your Judger History

Can you relate to Ben? I sure can. I get a lot of value from being an "expert," but being an expert can also limit me if I don't stay curious.

As you ask yourself each question, do your best to stay on the Learner path and avoid going Judger on your Judger.

Think back to when you were a child or teenager and ask yourself:

When is the first time I can remember encountering Judger Mindset? What had happened? Was I the person reacting from Judger or it was someone else?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

When this happened, what did my Judger Mindset say to me about myself?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

When this happened, what did my Judger Mindset say to me about other people and/or about life?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Now, as an adult, what situations, behaviors, words, or people tend to trigger my Judger reaction and what do I think, say, or do—or not say or do—when I "go Judger"?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What emotions and body sensations do I typically associate with my experience of Judger (when I'm being Judger with myself and/or with others)?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What Judger beliefs have I developed about myself, others, and the world?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Reflecting on what I've just written, what observations do I have about Judger and the impact it has had on me? What beliefs and patterns do I associate with Judger Mindset?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Somatic Practice: Standing & Breathing

Soma means body.

Before we keep going, let's take a break and do a somatic practice.

Mindset is not just in our heads. It is more than just our behaviors and thoughts. Mindset also includes our feelings, both physical and emotional, so it lives in our bodies, too. That means mindsets have a somatic component. That also means that to master our mindsets we must tune in to our bodies and notice the somatic aspects of both Learner and Judger.

To help you connect to your body, try the following somatic practice.

Start in a standing position. Reach your arms straight out to your sides at shoulder height. Turn your palms up and exhale deeply. As you begin to inhale, raise your arms up over your head and look up to see your hands touch. Then turn your palms down, and begin to exhale and lower your arms. Repeat this process three to five times.

When you're done, pause for a moment and scan your body. Ask yourself, "What bodily sensations am I experiencing right now?" Notice anything you are feeling and make note of it in the space below.

How Is My Judger Trying to Protect Me?

Now let's turn back to your Mindset Challenge and the specific Judger reaction that you are working to change. Review the Mindset Check-In answers to Parts 1 and 3 from chapter 1, as well as your Judger history before answering the following questions.

Remember, Judger Mindset is associated with the part of the brain focused on our survival, so it is almost certain that something about this situation threatens your sense of safety and well-being. Charles' constant questioning makes Ben feel unsafe for not knowing all the answers.

Please give yourself permission to feel whatever you are feeling. It's useful information and it will be okay.

What does my Judger Mindset seem to dislike, be worried about, be afraid of, be upset/angry about, or want to prevent? What does my Judger expect to be disappointed or hurt by?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What is my Judger Mindset trying to protect me from experiencing?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What else am I noticing about my Judger Mindset in this situation?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Assumptions, Facts, and Interpretations

As we examine our Judger Mindset—where it came from, what triggers it, what it's concerned about, and what we can learn from it—it is valuable to notice that Judger Mindset likes to make assumptions and jump to conclusions!

Of course, Learner Mindset makes assumptions, too. However, unlike Judger Mindset, which often treats assumptions as facts and insists our interpretations are accurate, Learner Mindset is willing to question, challenge, and test assumptions and interpretations to learn and grow.

Assumptions, facts, and interpretations are not the same!

- Facts are data or other information that has objective reality and can be independently verified.
- Assumptions are thoughts, ideas, opinions, or beliefs that one takes to be true without testing, verifying, or questioning.
- Interpretations are the meaning or significance we ascribe to facts, assumptions, thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

Assumptions, facts, and interpretations often show up in the questions we ask ourselves. They can influence the decisions we make, and the actions we take, which is how they impact our relationships and results.

What Am I Assuming?

Turn your attention once again to your Mindset Challenge and the Judger trigger you are working on changing your reaction to. What are you assuming about yourself, the other person, and the situation itself? Record your reflections in the space below.

What am I assuming about myself?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What am I assuming about the other person and their behavior?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Review the assumptions you listed and place a "J" next to any Judger Mindset assumptions and an "L" next to any Learner Mindset assumptions.

What can I learn from the assumptions I am making? How might this help me think differently about myself, the other person, their behavior, and/or the situation?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Judger Mindset Can Give Us Valuable Information

As I said before, Judger Mindset is associated with the part of the brain that is concerned with survival—survival of both our body and our ego, our sense of self. Judger wants to protect us and the people and things we care about from any perceived threat.

If we look closely at our assumptions, we can discover our Judger's expectations. Our Judger thinks there is a way everyone is "supposed to" behave, think, and feel. (Including ourselves!) We can also learn from our Judger what it cares about.

What Can I Learn from My Judger?

Let's look at Ben's responses first.

Ben's Mindset Challenge: Lessons from Ben's Judger

What is my Judger Mindset showing me that I expect of or believe about myself? What does my Judger Mindset assume I should be, do, have, or know?

My Judger Mindset clearly expects me to have all the answers all the time. I am supposed to have all the answers and save the day. Every time.

How reasonable are my Judger Mindset's assumptions and expectations of me?

As much as I love knowing the answers and all the success I've had as the "Answer Man," I must admit it's not reasonable to think anyone—even me—can always have all the answers. Sigh.

What is my Judger Mindset showing me that I expect of or believe about the other person? What does my Judger assume the other person should be, do, have, or know?

I am ashamed to admit this to myself, but I can see that I've expected Charles to shut up and fall into line. I expect him to not ask me so many questions and just do what I tell him. I also see that I assume he wants to get me fired so he can have my job. (No wonder I feel so on edge and frustrated around him! Yikes.)

How reasonable are my Judger's assumptions and expectations of this person?

Charles was here at QTec first; he knows the company and the team better than I do. I guess it's unreasonable to think he won't have opinions, ideas, and—dare I say it—questions about this project and how I'm managing it.

What does my Judger show me that I care about in this relationship?

My Judger is showing me I care about being right about Charles even if that means I'm working with someone I think is out to get me.

Your Mindset Challenge: Lessons from Your Judger

Look at the assumptions you have about yourself, others, and the world as you answer the following questions:

*What is my Judger Mindset showing me that I **expect of and believe about myself**? What does my Judger Mindset assume I should be, do, have, or know?*

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

How reasonable are my Judger Mindset's assumptions and expectations of me?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

*What is my Judger Mindset showing me that I **expect of or believe about the other person**? What does my Judger assume the other person should be, do, have, or know?*

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

How reasonable are my Judger's assumptions and expectations of this person?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What does my Judger show me that I care about in this relationship?

Great work!

Looking closely at our Judger Mindset takes courage and is an important step in mastering your mindset. Once you start learning from your Judger you can turn it into an advisor—and even a friend!

Take a deep breath and keep going!

Ask yourself…

When I listen to the other person with "Judger ears," how does that affect our relationship and the results we are supposed to create together?

Based on my assumptions, what do I seem to believe about this person? (Consider any labels you've assigned them, even negative ones.)

What alternative, Learner-based interpretations of their behavior or character could I make?

To improve my relationship with this person, what new Learner questions could I ask myself to replace my usual Judger questions?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

To improve my relationship with this person and improve our communication, what might be possible if I were to listen to them with "Learner ears"?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Remember! Making friends with your Judger is a Learner practice!

Well done! I know that was probably challenging, but the more Learner curiosity you bring to your Judger triggers, behaviors, thoughts, and feelings (both physical and emotional) the easier it will be to transform your relationship with Judger. You can turn Judger from an adversary to an advisor.

CHAPTER FOUR

What if You Could Choose to Switch Mindsets?

(Spoiler Alert: You Already Can!)

What Is Switching?

The ability to Switch is the basis for change and possibility. Switching is an ability all humans naturally possess, and we have all Switched many times in our lives, likely without even realizing it. I call that unconscious Switching. To master our mindsets, we must develop the skill of Switching intentionally.

Switching is our innate human ability to change our mindset, and it is a skill that can be intentionally developed.

Intentional Switching requires us to first notice what mindset we are in, and then make a conscious choice. We can either choose to remain in our current mindset or choose to ask a new question from a different mindset. Developing the skill of intentional Switching requires practice—we need to catch ourselves in Judger and make the conscious decision to Switch to Learner. We all go from Judger to Learner on occasion, but that is seldom intentional!

We will talk about how to build the skill of intentional Switching shortly. Before we do that, it's helpful to simply notice how naturally we move between Learner and Judger Mindsets.

LEARNER REFLECTION

What thoughts or feelings do I have about the possibility of Switching mindsets intentionally? What questions do I have about this idea? What implications might this have for me?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What Is It Like to Switch?

Look around you. Notice all the things in your space. Maybe you are at home and through a window you see a beautiful tree you planted thriving. Or maybe you see a picture hanging on the wall and notice that it is crooked. Perhaps you are on a plane and someone around you is talking loudly; or instead, perhaps you look outside and see the sun setting behind the mountains in the distance.

As you look around, pause to observe each mindset as it is triggered by your surroundings. Make note of any thoughts, emotions, or bodily feelings that accompany the mindset by completing the sentences below for at least five different people or things that you notice in your immediate environment:

1. Looking around I noticed _____

_____.

When I saw it I realized I was in _____

Mindset because I thought/felt/asked myself _____

_____.

When I thought/felt/asked myself this, I experienced _____

_____ in my body.

2. Looking around I noticed _____

_____.

When I saw it I realized I was in _____

Mindset because I thought/felt/asked myself _____

_____.

When I thought/felt/asked myself this, I experienced _____

_____ in my body.

3. Looking around I noticed _____

_____.

When I saw it I realized I was in _____

Mindset because I thought/felt/asked myself _____

_____.

When I thought/felt/asked myself this, I experienced _____

_____ in my body.

4. Looking around I noticed _____

_____.

When I saw it I realized I was in _____

Mindset because I thought/felt/asked myself _____

_____.

When I thought/felt/asked myself this, I experienced

_____ in my body.

5. Looking around I noticed _____

_____.

When I saw it I realized I was in _____

Mindset because I thought/felt/asked myself _____

_____.

When I thought/felt/asked myself this, I experienced

_____ in my body.

You Switch...Naturally

Notice how the simple act of looking around can evoke a mindset, whether Learner or Judger. Just like the person standing on the Start arrow of the Choice Map, each thing you noticed was a stimulus—in this case an external stimulus. As something or someone caught your attention, you automatically found yourself in a mindset, either Learner or Judger (Figure 5).

As you completed this exercise, what did you notice about the feelings that went along with each mindset? Maybe you observed yourself exhaling a cleansing sigh at seeing something or someone you love. Or maybe you felt tension in your shoulders or jaw as you observed something out of place. Or perhaps you felt yourself furrowing your brow as you listened to someone say something you dislike.

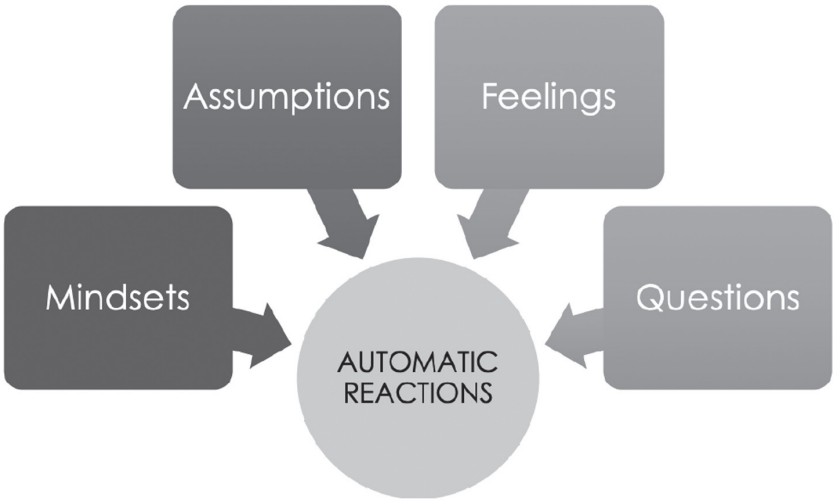

Figure 5: Automatic Responses

Look at all five of your response questions. Are they all Learner? All Judger? It's possible that you only had one type of mindset reaction in this exercise, but most people end up with a mix of both. Regardless of what triggered these mindset responses, whether Learner or Judger, you have almost certainly experienced yourself, at some point, Switch from one mindset to the other. That is what it means for Switching to be an innate human ability.

When we Switch naturally—and by naturally I mean unconsciously—we are still reacting automatically to our mindset, assumptions, feelings, and questions. We can learn to intentionally Switch by practicing Learner questions and using our breath to ground us when we notice we are in Judger.

Switching Strategy #1: The ABCD Choice Process for Switching

ABCD is a simple way to remember to Switch if you discover you've landed in Judger and don't want to stay there. Each letter specifies questions to ask yourself. Often building the habit of saying ABCD to yourself is all you'll need to Switch (Figure 6). I've even worked with teams who remind each other about this all the time—from a Learner Mindset, of course!

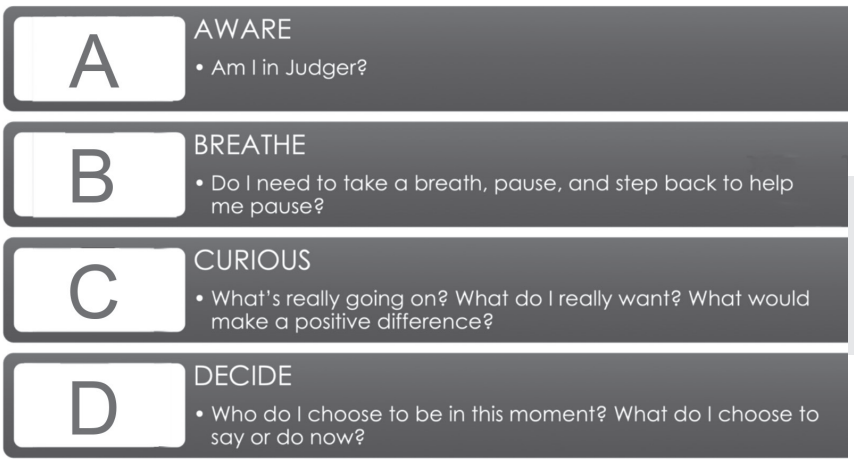

Figure 6: ABCD Process

How Can I Practice ABCD?

Think about your Mindset Challenge and remember what the person says or does that regularly triggers a Judger Mindset reaction from you. As you focus on this Judger trigger, slow down and be gentle with yourself. Being kind to yourself is a wonderful Learner practice.

A: What are you AWARE of?

Now that you've brought that Judger trigger to mind, answer the following questions to help you notice what you're experiencing:

What thoughts and feelings am I having?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What questions am I asking myself?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What sensations am I experiencing in my body?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

B: What happens if you pause and take an intentional BREATH?

Now take a deep breath through your nose, exhale completely, and reflect on these questions:

How does taking a deep breath and exhaling fully make me feel?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

How does breathing fully and deeply impact the experience of my Judger trigger? (For example, did your clenched jaw relax or the intensity of the emotion you were feeling subside?)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

How might moving my body help me manage my Judger reaction?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Somatic Practice: Four-Count Breath

Notice yourself in Judger? To get centered, try taking a four-count breath.

Inhale through your nose for a count of four, pause for one count, exhale for a count of four, and then pause for one count. Repeat the process several times until you feel grounded and calmer.

C: What is there to be CURIOUS about?

In becoming Aware of your mindset and choosing to take a Breath, you have already been using Learner curiosity to help you Switch. Bringing Learner curiosity to our Judger reactions is an essential aspect of Switching.

Let's revisit Ben and find out what his curiosity uncovers.

Ben's Mindset Challenge: Ben's Learner Curiosity

*What's really going on **with me**? What am I really upset about?*

I have to face it; what I'm really upset about is not Charles and his questions. I'm upset at myself and the fact that I'm failing, and I'm upset that I can't answer his questions. Charles is just reminding me that there is so much I don't know, and I hate not knowing.

*What is really going on **with the other person**? What do they care about?*

I'm not sure I know what Charles cares about. Keeping his job? I've assumed he only cares about getting promoted but he stayed at QTec even after he got passed over, so maybe that's not true.

How is what the other person wants/cares about aligned—or out of alignment—with what I care about? How can we find common ground?

I guess I better start asking Charles some questions if I want the answer to this one. Ha!

Your Mindset Challenge: Your Learner Curiosity

Now ask yourself…

*What's going on **with me**? What am I really upset about?*

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

*What do I think is really going on **with the other person**? What do they care about?*

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

How is what the other person wants/cares about aligned—or out of alignment—with what I care about? How can we find common ground?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

D: What will you DECIDE to do?

The last part of Switching is deciding whether to stay on the Judger Mindset path or intentionally step onto the Learner Mindset path and decide what to say or do next.

Reminder! In the future, you will be triggered and react from Judger even after you've become skilled at mastering your mindset and Switching! I've been working to master my mindset for many years, and I still react from Judger sometimes. The good news is, I go there less frequently and it's less intense and now I can usually laugh about it.

In this exercise you are only reflecting on the Judger trigger you chose to work on, which is not the same as experiencing the Judger trigger in real time. Taking the time here to ask yourself the following questions will help you decide to Switch when you are triggered in the future. This practice will support you in remaining in Learner Mindset.

Who do I want to be in my relationship with this person?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

How is my Judger Mindset getting in the way of being who I want to be?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

When my Judger is triggered by this person and their behavior, what could I say or do that would allow me to show up as the person I want to be?

What Switching question(s) could I ask myself when I notice I am in Judger and don't want to be?

What somatic practice could help me Switch?

Switching Strategy #2: Switching Questions

You can also trigger a mindset Switch by asking yourself a specific kind of quesion, referred to as a "Switching Question." Think of Switching questions as rescue questions or "first responder" questions. They can literally rescue you from Judger experiences or consequences once you've recognized that's where you are. Switching questions give you the opportunity to choose a new course, and sometimes make major breakthroughs—both with yourself and in your relationships with others.

Switching questions are "from-to" questions that carry you from Judger Mindset to Learner Mindset when you've chosen to Switch (Figure 7). Switching questions are actually Learner Mindset questions you can use when you notice you are in Judger and don't want to be. Ask them in order to interrupt your Judger Mindset thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and listening. Then you can invite yourself to Switch over to the Learner path. Switching questions are embedded in the ABCD process because when we are curious we ask ourselves questions—usually from Learner.

Whether or not you realize it, you already have Switching questions of your own. The ultimate goal is to develop Switching as a reliable and predictable skill.

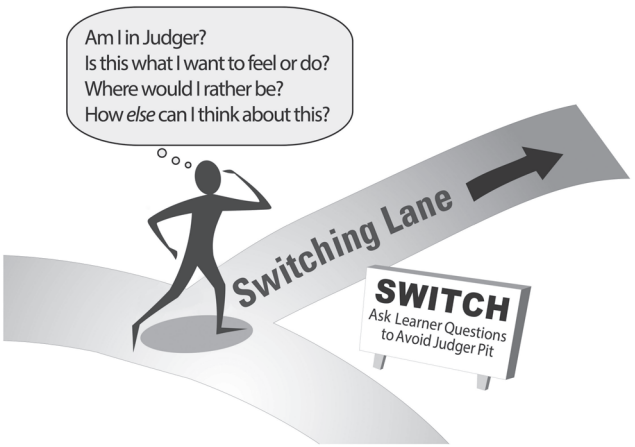

Figure 7: Switching Lane

How Can I Discover My Switching Questions?

The best Switching questions are those that feel most natural and accessible to you. Review this list and place a check next to every question that you could imagine yourself using anytime, anywhere, with any person. You may find yourself checking all of them! Feel free to add any of your own Switching questions in the space provided on the next page.

- ☐ Am I in Judger?
- ☐ How else can I think about this?
- ☐ What's surprising about this?
- ☐ Where would I rather be?
- ☐ What do we agree about?
- ☐ Is this what I want to feel?
- ☐ Is this what I want to be doing?
- ☐ Is this battle really worth fighting?
- ☐ What am I missing or avoiding?
- ☐ What is my goal right now?
- ☐ Am I afraid right now?
- ☐ Am I being the kind of person (colleague, friend, family member, leader) I want to be?
- ☐ What am I committed to right now?
- ☐ What might the other person be thinking, feeling, and wanting?
- ☐ What humor can I find in this situation?
- ☐ Is this the example I want to set for others (my children, colleagues, friends, etc.)?

- ☐ What other interpretations are possible?
- ☐ Am I just trying to be right?
- ☐ What do I want for myself, others, and the situation?
- ☐ What is this feeling/emotion telling me?
- ☐ How could I be contributing to the situation (even unintentionally)?
- ☐ Who do I choose to be in this moment?
- ☐ NOW, what is my choice?

Add your own Switching questions here:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Now place a star next to the Switching question that can be your go-to question when you find yourself in Judger about the trigger you are working on. Next time you find yourself in Judger Mindset, take a deep breath and ask yourself this question and then see what happens. Experiment with a few other Switching questions as well, and see which ones make a difference for you.

Use this space to boldly write down your best "go-to" Switching questions.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What Are Two Possible Futures?

Earlier in the Welcome section when I was telling you about how I discovered Question Thinking while struggling with my dissertation, I showed you the New Futures Model. Let's look at it again, this time through the lens of Switching (Figure 8).

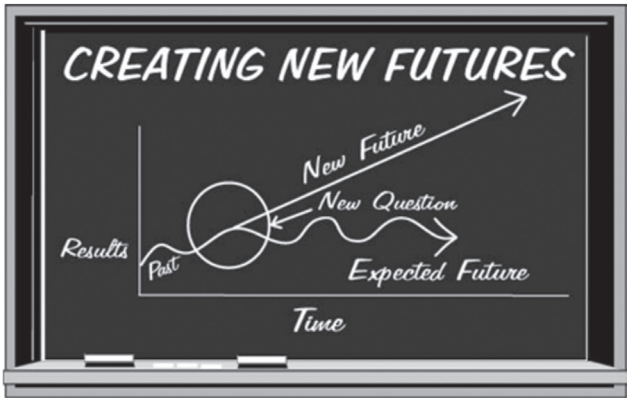

Figure 8: New Futures Model

Fundamentally, the New Futures Model shows us how Switching can impact our future: When we ask a new question we create new possible outcomes.

Let's revisit Ben's story and see how he creates a new future for himself and his team using new questions.

Ben's Mindset Challenge: Ben's New Future

Working with Joseph teaches Ben how to use Question Thinking and the Choice Map to see the Judger Mindset questions he is thinking with about Charles—such as, "Why does Charles want to sabotage me?"—and encourages Ben to Switch. Ben takes this coaching and switches his old questions for new ones like, "What is Charles seeing that I am missing?" and "How else can I think about Charles?"

After a coaching session with Joseph, Ben chooses to sit down with Charles and admit to his Judger listening and reacting. By owning his Judger, Ben creates a space in which Charles feels safe to do the same. From there, they begin to collaborate effectively from Learner, which changes the course of their project and relationship. Ultimately, Ben and Charles are able to deliver their project on time and to great success.

The new results Ben enjoyed were not miracles. They simply illustrate how changing the internal questions we ask ourselves has the power to change the results we get.

Your Mindset Challenge: Your New Future

In this exercise, you get to explore two possible futures for the situation you are working on:

1. the **likely future** if you keep asking yourself the same Judger questions you've been thinking with about yourself, the other person, and the situation
2. the **new future** you could create by using Learner curiosity when confronted with the annoying situation and choose instead to ask yourself Switching questions.

Think about your situation again as you answer the following questions:

What is the likely future if I keep thinking with the Judger questions I have about myself, the other person, and their behavior? Consider the disagreements you are likely to have and how those issues could impact both your relationship and any outcomes.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What new future could I create if I choose to Switch whenever I notice I am in Judger with myself or with the other person?

What results do I want to create for myself? With the other person? Which of these futures will get me closest to the results I want?

When I encounter this person saying or doing the thing that usually triggered my Judger in the past, what will it take for me to stay calm and connected to my Learner Mindset? How can I support myself in Switching? What might I need from myself or the other person to help me respond from Learner rather than react from Judger?

But What if I Don't Want to Switch Yet?

If you're wondering whether you are ready and willing to Switch, congratulations! You are demonstrating a level of self-awareness and honesty that is vital in learning to master your mindset using Question Thinking.

Sometimes we just aren't ready to Switch—and that's 100% okay!

Notice that even asking yourself the question, "Am I ready to Switch out of Judger Mindset?" is itself a Switching question. When you ask yourself a Switching question, you already have one foot on the Learner Mindset path—even if the answer to your question is "No, I'm not ready to Switch yet!"

LEARNER REFLECTION

What thoughts or feelings do I have about sometimes being reluctant to Switch? What questions do I have about this idea? What implications might this have for me?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Switching usually calls for curiosity, compassion, empathy, forgiveness, and acceptance for ourselves and for others. And sometimes we just aren't yet in a place to grant ourselves or others that grace.

You may be holding onto Judger thoughts, feelings, beliefs, assumptions, or interpretations about yourself, another person, or a situation. If you find yourself reluctant to let go of a Judger Mindset reaction, simply pause and see if you can examine that resistance with Learner curiosity. Please remember to be kind to yourself as you do this. Going Judger on Judger causes unnecessary suffering and is never helpful!

Let's give it a try.

What Makes Me Hold onto Judger?

Once again, think about your Judger reaction in the Mindset Challenge you've been working on. You may even want to go back to the Mindset Check-In you completed in chapter 1 and review your answers to the Judger Mindset questions in Parts 1 and 3 before you complete this exercise.

What Judger Mindset thoughts, feelings, beliefs, assumptions, interpretations, or questions might I be holding onto related to my Mindset Challenge? (Your Judger reaction may be toward yourself or toward the other person.)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Why am I holding onto these Judger Mindset thoughts, feelings, beliefs, assumptions, interpretations, or questions? What do they mean to me? What would happen if I challenged my Judger perspective? How is holding onto this Judger perspective making me right or helping me feel safe and certain?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What Switching question(s) could I ask myself if I notice that I am having any of these Judger thoughts, feelings, beliefs, assumptions, interpretations, or questions?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

If I let go of any of these Judger Mindset thoughts, feelings, beliefs, assumptions, interpretations, or questions about myself, what would become possible for me and/or for the other person involved?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What else is this exercise showing me about my relationship with my Judger Mindset? How can I use that insight to support me when I find myself struggling to Switch?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

I acknowledge you for your courage. Being honest with yourself about any reluctance to Switch is hard work—and I promise you it's well worth it. Some of my biggest moments of personal growth have come from bringing Learner curiosity to my reluctance to Switch. Give yourself a pat on the back, then we'll use a somatic practice to help us reset.

Somatic Practice: Hand on Heart

Linda Graham, MFT. *Bouncing Back: Rewiring Your Brain for Maximum Resilience and Well-Being*. Used with permission.

The "Hand on Heart" practice is a powerful, easy, and quick way to become calm and centered. It's also a physical, embodied way to switch from Judger to Learner, which is why I call it a "Learner practice." It works because it helps counteract the stress hormone cortisol by releasing the calming hormone oxytocin. This helps us develop a state of equanimity. I do this practice often. I even do it in meetings because it's such a normal, everyday gesture that no one notices!

Here's how it works:

1. Place your hand over your heart and feel the warmth of your own touch. You might notice the warmth spreading beyond your hand. You might also notice the feeling of your chest rising and falling as you inhale and exhale.
2. Breathe slowly and deeply through your nose into your heart center.
3. Bring to mind an experience of being with someone who loves you unconditionally and with whom you feel completely safe (pets count too!).
4. Notice in your body any positive, calming feelings as you recall this experience.
5. When your connection to these feelings is steady, continue your deep, slow breathing as you release the image and simply bathe in the calm for about 30 seconds.

CHAPTER FIVE

What Could Learner Living Do for You?

Living in Learner can change your world.

In his book *Neurodharma,* neuropsychologist Rick Hanson writes: "Learning is the strength of strengths, since it's the one that grows the rest of them." With that in mind, look again at the Choice Map. Remember, it is a map showing the landscape of our mindsets. Since both Learner Mindset and Judger Mindsets are part of us and always will be, the goal of mastering your mindset is not to get rid of Judger Mindset. Instead, the goal is to strengthen and stabilize your Learner Mindset, which includes knowing that Judger will show up from time to time. When it does, you will be able to intentionally and reliably Switch to your Learner Mindset.

Think of each mindset as a physical place. The goal of mastering your mindset is to have Learner Mindset become your primary residence with only brief visits to Judger Mindset. Developing the ability to return quickly to Learner any time we find ourselves in Judger is what I mean by mastering your mindset. This is also the foundation of what I call Learner Living.

Learner Living is a commitment to embodying and applying mindset mastery in our daily lives so we increase the time we spend in Learner and decrease the frequency and impact of Judger, which creates better experiences, relationships, and results.

LEARNER REFLECTION

What thoughts or feelings do I have about the possibility of living more reliably in my Learner Mindset? What questions do I have about this idea? What implications and possibilities might this have for me?

How Can I Live (Mostly) in Learner?

How would your life be different if you lived most of the time in Learner? At the beginning of this workbook, I asked you to focus on a person who says or does something that regularly triggers your Judger Mindset. When you chose that triggering situation to work on, I asked you how your life would be better if you could change your reaction. We will return there in a moment, but first let's take time to reflect on how living predominantly in Learner would improve your life in general. I encourage you to think big about all the joy, love, and success you can envision for yourself!

*What would be possible if I could spend most of my time in Learner Mindset **at work**? How would my relationships at **work** be better if I were in Learner Mindset most of the time?*

What would be possible if I could spend most of my time in Learner Mindset ***at home****? How would my relationships* ***at home*** *be better if I were in Learner Mindset most of the time?*

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What would be possible if I could spend most of my time in Learner Mindset ***when I have an important decision to make****?*

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What would be possible if I could spend most of my time in Learner Mindset ***when I'm experiencing conflict****?*

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What would be possible if I could spend most of my time in Learner Mindset ***when I've made a mistake****?*

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What would be possible if I could spend most of my time in Learner Mindset ***when someone else has done something I find hurtful or disrespectful****?*

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

*How would I relate to **myself** with more acceptance and compassion if I could quickly and reliably Switch when I realize I am in Judger?*

*How would I relate to **others** more generously and effectively if I could quickly and reliably Switch when I realize I am in Judger?*

What else would be better in my life if I spent most of my time in Learner Mindset? Could I become less stressed and calmer?

Let's get back to the situation you've been using for your Mindset Challenge throughout this workbook.

*How would **the results** I am getting improve if I could stay predominantly in Learner when this person says or does the thing that triggers my Judger reaction? How could this benefit my relationship with the other person?*

*How would staying predominantly in Learner Mindset about this situation enhance **my relationship with myself**?*

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Q-Prep a Conversation

Now that you see the value Learner Mindset creates, it's time to plan how to remain in Learner in the face of a likely Judger Mindset trigger. Specifically, think about the next conversation you might have with the person from your Mindset Challenge. Chances are this conversation will offer opportunities for your Judger Mindset to be triggered again.

Good.

Most conversations with others offer bounteous opportunities to practice Switching!

Why? Because we come to conversations already making assumptions and interpreting information in our own unique way—and so does the other person. Since Judger listens for disagreement, conversations can easily trigger Judger Mindset.

Think about your situation as you answer the following questions. These questions make up the Question Thinking protocol that I call Q-Prep.

Q-Prep is a protocol for preparing for successful conversations and meetings using prompts for thinking through goals, assumptions, and questions to ask oneself and others.

Your Mindset Challenge: Q-Prep

What are my goals for this conversation (for myself, the other person, and the situation)?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

*What **questions** am I asking myself about the situation, the other person, myself, and/or my goals? (Include both your Judger and Learner questions.)*

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

*What **assumptions** am I making about myself, the situation, the other person, and my goals?*

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

*What questions might **the other person** be asking themselves with regard to the situation, me, their concerns, and/or goals? (Include possible Judger and Learner questions.)*

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What questions might the other person/people ask me?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What questions do I want and/or need to ask the other person/people so the conversation is successful? (Make this as long a list as possible.)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Take time to reflect on your Q-Prep responses as you ask yourself…

How might my Judger Mindset get triggered during this conversation?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What Switching strategies will I use when I notice I am in Judger? (For example, ask yourself a go-to Switching question, take a deep breath, do a somatic practice, etc.)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

How can I prepare myself to listen to the other person with Learner ears?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Now putting all this together, ask yourself…

Ideally, how would I like this conversation to go?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What would be a win for me, the other person, and this situation?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What would I say (or not say) or do (or not do) in this conversation that would signal to me that I've taken steps toward mastering my mindset?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Remember to celebrate when you see progress—any progress! Remember, we're going for progress, not perfection!

Mastering your mindset using Question Thinking requires intention, preparation, and practice. The faster we can notice—or even anticipate—the presence of Judger, the sooner we can Switch to Learner. The more practice we have and the more mentally prepared we are, the faster we can notice and Switch. Once in Learner, we can focus on moving forward and creating Learner solutions, experiences, and results.

Learner Living Tip. Be prepared to have your Judger Mindset triggered on a regular basis–it will happen because you're human. Prepare for this inevitability by having a Switching strategy ready to support you in getting back onto the Learner Mindset path.

What can I do to prepare myself to stay on the Learner Mindset path regardless of how the other person shows up to our conversation?

I encourage you to use Q-Prep as often as possible. It's many people's favorite QT tool, in addition to the Choice Map. I keep a notebook on my desk and do a brief Q-Prep for almost every conversation I have. As a result, my meetings are more productive, my conversations are more satisfying, and I even have the occasional breakthrough.

Q-Prep Reflection

Once you've had the conversation for which you completed the Q-Prep, use the space below to reflect on what happened, any progress, and what you've learned.

How did using Q-Prep influence how I conducted the conversation?

How did my Judger Mindset show up in this conversation? Did I react to it or just notice it? Was I able to Switch? If yes, what Switching strategy did I use? What Switching question(s) did I ask myself? What was the outcome?

If I had not completed a Q-Prep before the conversation, how might it have gone?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What am I celebrating about how I managed my mindset in this conversation? Was there anything I did—or didn't—say or do that reflected my growing mindset mastery?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What did I learn from how I managed my mindset in this conversation that I can apply in the future?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Remember...Reflection is a foundational Learner Mindset practice. It gives us the space to pause, learn, and grow from what we observe.

CHAPTER SIX

Welcome to Your New Future

What new possibilities can you imagine?

Look How Far You've Come

Great work! You've demonstrated commitment to your Learner Living change journey…not everyone does. Take this moment to celebrate.

In case you're not one for self-congratulations, allow me to remind you of all you've accomplished. By dedicating yourself to this journey, you've deepened awareness of your mindsets and the questions you think with. This is the basis of developing true self-awareness, the foundation of all learning and growth. You've looked courageously at your Judger Mindset and begun the process of turning your Judger into an advisor. You've also built a Learner Mindset practice through self-reflection and the Mindset Challenge. And of course, you've learned the vital art of Switching.

The Only Person You Can Change Is *You*... and That's What Makes You Powerful!

Have you noticed that throughout this workbook we have only focused on your mindsets—not the other person's? There's an important reason for that.

The only person you can change is you, and the only mindset you can master is your own.

As tempted as you may be to try to Switch another person when you think they are in Judger Mindset, that's not your work to do. Imagine how you would react if you were in the grip of a Judger Mindset reaction and someone asked you if you were in Judger. That would just push most of us deeper into the Judger Pit!

The good news is, as you master your mindset, how you show up when other people are in Judger will change. As you practice Switching to Learner instead of reacting from Judger, you will create new possibilities and new futures that would never have been possible if you'd stayed in Judger.

No one can change anyone else, however, we can contribute to the conditions that might make it easier for someone to change. We do that by being in Learner ourselves so they can join us there. Remaining committed to growing and changing through mastering your mindset is the essence of Learner Living.

> "Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing, there is a field. I'll meet you there."
>
> Rumi

How Has Your Mindset Shifted?

As we come to the end of our journey together, it's time to reflect on any changes you might have made with regard to your Mindset Challenge.

Where have I experienced shifts, either toward myself or others?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What actions could I take to keep positive momentum going?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What can I learn from any patterns I notice about what triggers my Judger?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What progress have I made toward achieving the change I set out to make at the start of this workbook? Remember to celebrate both your progress and your effort!

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

How is strengthening my Learner Mindset helping me change my life for the better?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What am I acknowledging and celebrating myself for on my Learner Living journey so far?

_____
_____
_____
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_____

More Ways to Learn

Now that you are nearing the end of this learning journey, I encourage you to take advantage of some other ways to keep your momentum going. Here are a few suggestions for how to stay committed to Learner Living:

1. **Practice Makes Perfect!**

   First, know that you can always work through this book again from the beginning, as many times as you want. Choose another annoying situation with the same person, or a new person and new situation entirely and do a new Mindset Challenge. For example, if you picked a situation and person at work the first time around, you could select a person and situation from your personal life to work with. You could even review your list of annoying situations in chapter 1, and choose another one to work through.

2. **Find a Learning Buddy!**

   Some people learn better when we have a learning buddy to share our journey. Find someone who will work through their own Mindset Challenge so you can compare experiences, reinforce Question Thinking skills, and support each other. You could ask a colleague at work, a friend, or even a spouse or partner.

   a. Discuss and share your Switching stories.

   b. Tell each other about moments when you fell into the Judger Pit and what you did about it.

   c. Celebrate discoveries you made about yourselves and the new awareness you are each building.

   d. Create a "Learner Alliance" and check in regularly to support each other using QT Tools, like the Choice Map, Switching questions, and Q-Prep.

3. Make It a Team Endeavor!

It can be particularly powerful to work through the Mindset Challenge with a team that works together regularly. This can be a team at work, but it could also be a book club, a community group, and any other group of people who meet regularly. You can each work through your own Mindset Challenge, and share thoughts and reactions, following the prompts from the suggestions about using the workbook with a learning buddy above.

Using the Choice Map and this workbook can help your team or group to become more effective, more productive, and more relational.

What Now?

While what you've accomplished is all good news, I have even better news to share. Most of the work you've done here related to the Mindset Challenge scenario you chose to work on. Happily, the skills you've learned can also be applied to any situation in your life where Judger triggers come into play. That means everywhere!

On the next two pages, you'll find a new blank Choice Map to fill out (Figure 9). Now that you have experienced the full arc of the Mindset Challenge, you've learned a lot about yourself, your Learner, and your Judger. In filling out this Choice Map, you will be creating a powerful reference tool for yourself—a road map that will help you identify your mindsets and Switch.

I invite you to reflect on the Judger Mindset questions you've been asking yourself most frequently in your life and write those in the Judger Mindset path thought bubbles. Feel free to look through all the Judger questions from the Choice Map and the exercises you've done in this workbook to find the questions that tend to continually come up for you.

Also reflect on Learner Mindset questions that you use frequently and write those in the Learner thought bubbles. You might have some new Learner questions since you've completed this workbook. These are questions that will help you to advance your Learner Mindset thinking or help you Switch when you notice you are in Judger.

When you've completed the exercise, you will have a personalized map of the Learner Mindset and Judger Mindsets questions that come up for you most. With those Learner questions and your new self-awareness, oh, the places you'll go!

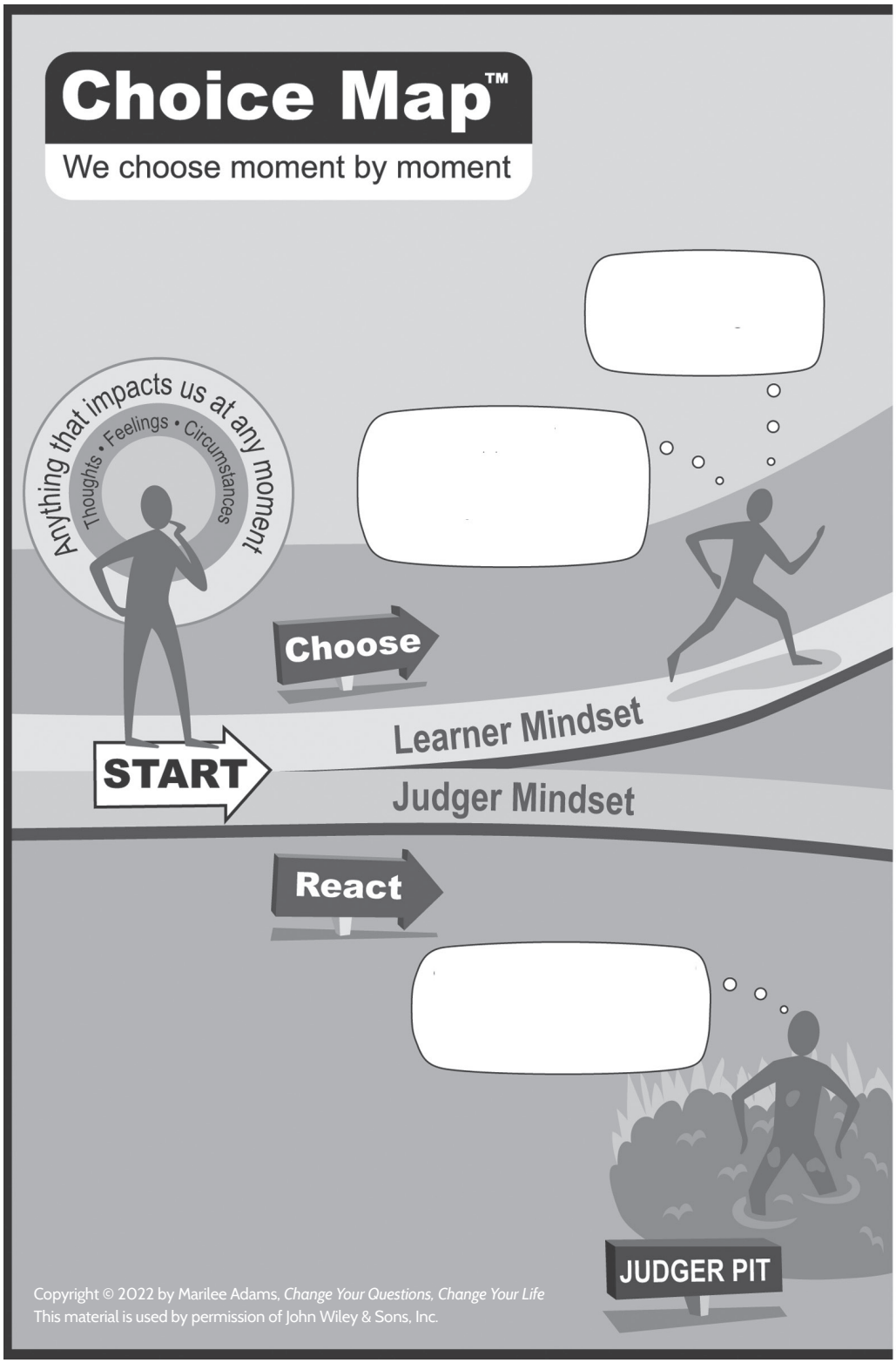
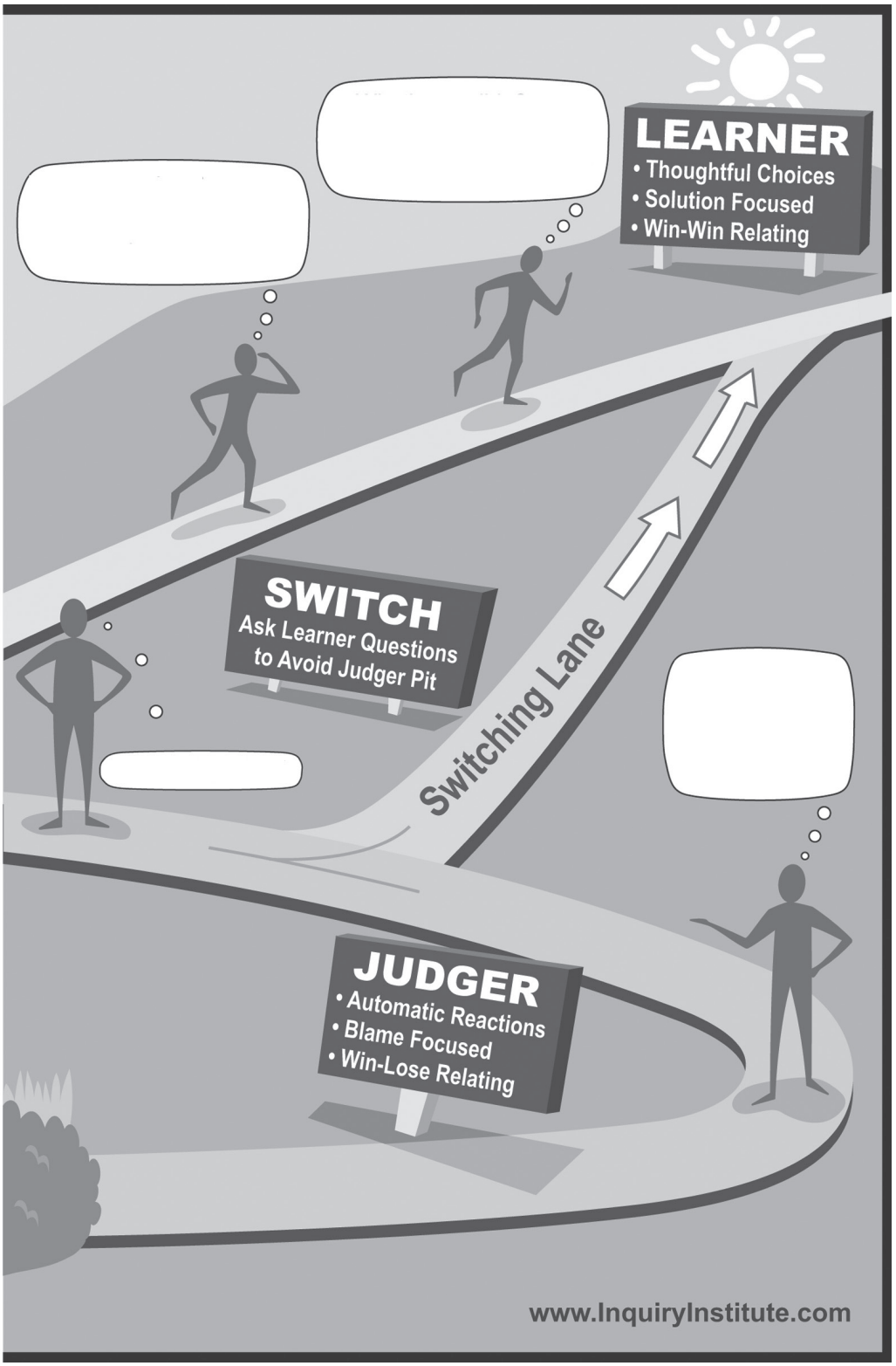


Figure 9: My Choice Map #2


LEARNER
• Thoughtful Choices
• Solution Focused
• Win-Win Relating
SWITCH
Ask Learner Questions
to Avoid Judger Pit
Switching Lane
JUDGER
• Automatic Reactions
• Blame Focused
• Win-Lose Relating
www.InquiryInstitute.com

My Personal Vision for Learner Living

This workbook has led you through a Learner Living change journey. I hope you have enjoyed learning how to make friends with Judger and how to Switch from Judger Mindset to Learner Mindset. If you've made even one small change, you can make many more until Learner Living is your new normal.

Now it's time to expand on what Learner Living could make wonderful and possible in your entire life. In the space below, use your imagination to create a vision of Learner Living as your new normal. What would your relationships at work and home be like? What could your relationship with yourself become? How would being a resilient Learner affect your results and experiences in your life in general? How much more ease, calm, connection, fun, and even love could you enjoy?

What additional possibilities do you see for yourself? Give yourself wild permission to envision what your life and your relationships could look and feel like when they are rooted in Learner Living.

My Learner Living Pledge

Now that you've completed your Mindset Challenge and made it to the end of this change journey, I invite you to commit yourself to your own vision of Learner Living. This inevitably includes falling into Judger from time to time. When that happens, you now know to kindly remind yourself that you are human and look for what you can learn from Judger and have confidence in your ability to Switch!

I, _____, am committed to Learner Living.

I thank my Judger for [list whatever your Judger has taught you]

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Without you I would not be the Learner I am today.

From this day forward, I will use the awareness and tools of mindset mastery and Question Thinking to keep building my Learner Living skills. This is how I can keep showing up as Learner for my colleagues, family, friends, community, and myself. In this way, I can contribute to creating a Learner world.

Signed _____ Date _____

Here's a suggestion: mark your calendar to come back to this workbook to reinforce and celebrate your continuing progress.

Congratulations!

We have finally arrived at the end of this journey together. I'm so appreciative of you for the time, effort, and commitment that this achievement has called for. I've been doing this work with myself daily for about 30 years now. I certainly wouldn't have the wonderful life I have today (including its ups and downs!) without living as Learner and accepting Judger over and over and over again.

I've also had the privilege of doing this work directly with thousands of people all over the world, including in many organizations, large and small. I've witnessed up close and personal the remarkably positive impact that Question Thinking can make, both at work and at home. People say that they find the QT work "practical and profound and easy to use." They tell me that they are enjoying more peace, confidence, and connection in their lives. They also say they've become more optimistic that having a successful and satisfying life, regardless of the circumstances, is possible for them personally.

This is my heartfelt desire for you as well. You have the awareness, tools, and practices you need. May you use them often and well to bring more clarity, wisdom, love, and success into your life.

I know that Learner Living is easier when connected with others on the same journey, so I invite you to join our Learner Community. And I'd love to hear from you about how you're doing and whatever questions you might have.

In the spirit of inquiry!

Marilee

Learner Resources

Choice Map Download: As you've learned in the book, the Choice Map is a powerful self-coaching tool to help you learn about your Learner Mindset and Judger Mindset and discover new questions to get the results you want. To receive your free full color copy of the Choice Map, visit InquiryInstitute.com.

Change Your Questions, Change Your Life Book Club: Engage with our Learner Community by joining the Change Your Questions, Change Your Life Book Club! Participate with other Learners from all around the world who want to learn, engage with, and support each other with the concepts from the book. Register to join at https://InquiryInstitute.com/LearnerResources.

Online Courses

The Choice Map Course: Are you curious about how you can use The Choice Map™ in your daily life and experience more happiness, connection, and productivity? The Choice Map Online Course will take you on the journey of exploring your mindsets and how to effectively use the Choice Map with yourself and in relationships with others. Learn more at https://InquiryInstitute.com/LearnerResources.

Seven Days to Learner Living: To reinforce your Learner Mindset and build Learner habits, the Seven Days to Learner Living Online Course will help you develop the strengths of Learner Mindset, understand Judger Mindset, and know how to Switch back to Learner when you fall into Judger. Learn more at https://InquiryInstitute.com/LearnerResources.

Live Programs (in Person and Virtual)

Do you want Learner Living and breakthrough results for yourself, your team, and/or your organization? Visit our website Services page for details.

Question Thinking (QT) Foundation: The QT Foundation Workshop is a practical, experiential introduction to Question Thinking and mindset mastery.

It covers the core skills, tools, and practices you need to begin your journey to more success, satisfaction, and breakthrough results.

Question Thinking (QT) Foundation & Practice: In this workshop you will deepen your skills with mindset mastery, Question Thinking, question asking, and communication. You will explore applications of the QT practices as they empower leaders, teams, and organizational culture. During this intensive, interactive learning experience, you will also gain new tools to bring Learner Living to every aspect of your life, both professional and personal.

Chief Question Officer® Certificate Program: This immersive training experience is for leaders, coaches, and consultants who want to embody and become expert at bringing QT practices and solutions to clients in businesses, teams, and organizations. The Chief Question Officer Certificate Program is a transformational learning journey over six months. Upon becoming a Chief Question Officer (CQO), you can apply to become an Authorized Trainer and license the QT material for your organization and clients.

Q-Storming® Workshop: Here you learn this breakthrough process that catalyzes the discovery of new questions, possibilities, and solutions and is often more powerful than brainstorming. You will learn the foundations of the Q-Storming process that leads to collaboration, problem solving, innovation, and strategic thinking. Recommended for you, teams, project management, and organizations.

Glossary

Mindset: The beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and possibilities we hold about ourselves, others, and the world. Our mindset is not static and can change unconsciously from moment to moment, or, when we learn to master it, we can choose to change our mindset intentionally.

Question Thinking: How we think with questions and, when utilized intentionally, is a method of purposeful and skillful question asking that improves the quality and results of the questions we ask ourselves and others.

Learner Mindset: A mindset characterized by curiosity, flexibility, open-mindedness, and appreciation—all encoded in a set of beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and possibilities we hold about ourselves, others, and the world. Everyone has a Learner Mindset.

Judger Mindset: A mindset characterized by the desire to be right, in control, safe, and certain, and it stems, in part, from our hardwiring for survival. Judger Mindset is frequently critical and judgmental of both self and others—all encoded in a set of beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and possibilities we hold about ourselves, others, and the world. Everyone has a Judger Mindset.

Choice Map: The self-awareness and self-coaching tool that illustrates the two mindsets we all share: Learner and Judger. It helps us locate which mindset we are in at any given moment. That enables us to map where our current mindset will likely take us, and can help us choose whether to proceed on our current path or Switch mindsets and travel a different route that will take us to the results we want.

Switching: This is the innate ability all humans possess to change their mindset and it is a skill that can be intentionally developed.

ABCD Choice Process: The QT tool that describes the process of Switching from Judger Mindset to Learner Mindset: becoming Aware of your mindset, taking a moment to step back and Breathe, getting Curious about yourself, and Deciding what to do next.

Learner Living: A commitment to create better experiences, relationships, and results in our daily lives so that we spend more time in Learner and decrease the frequency and impact of Judger.

Learner Listening and Judger Listening: The mindset through which we listen impacts how we interpret what we hear. Learner Mindset listens with Learner questions such as, "What's valuable in what they're saying?" Judger ears listen with Judger questions such as, "What's wrong with what they're saying?" At any moment we can choose to listen with Learner ears or with Judger ears.

Acknowledgments

Marilee appreciates her Judger for being such an insistent teacher and her Learner for being brave, vulnerable, and astute enough to listen! I am grateful beyond measure for those who support me on my own Learner Living journey. They share my belief in the transformative power of Question Thinking to make a significant difference in people's lives and in the world. In particular, I take pleasure in acknowledging:

Andrea Lipton, my copilot in creating the *Change Your Questions, Change Your Life Workbook.* As Senior Director of Learning for Inquiry Institute, Andrea took on Learner Living with gusto. She has been a brilliant and tireless partner on the journey of bringing Learner Living to as many people as possible.

Hal Zina Bennett, to whom this workbook is dedicated. Hal has been my writing coach, editor, and thinking partner for over 20 years. His wisdom, expertise, and kindness live in all my books and in my life.

Anna Leinberger and Steve Piersanti for being such assiduous, wise, and committed partners on this writing journey with me.

Detta Penna has done beautiful work in designing the interior of this workbook. This is the fifth BK book that Detta has designed for me. I value her talent as well as her friendship.

BK Publishers staff and associates are extraordinary partners in helping bring my vision into reality. I extend my appreciation to María Jesús Aguilo, Debbie Berne, Susan Walters Schmid, Valerie Caldwell, Michael Crowley, Kristen Frantz, Katelyn Keating, Catherine Lengronne, Neal Maillet, David Marshall, Steve Piersanti, Becky Robinson, Jeevan Sivasubramaniam, Katie Sheehan, and Johanna Vondeling.

Harold Weinstein, colleague, friend, and Learner-champion who brought his expertise to bear in creating the Mindset Check-In.

Linda Graham for her generous permission to use the "Hand on Heart" practice.

The Inquiry Institute team and our advisors are my treasured home base. The foundation includes Kim Aubry, partner and QT ambassador extraordinaire, and Lisa Kanda, our Marketing Director. I am also grateful for Lina Avallone, Mark Brodsky, Lindsay Burr, Sam Cook, Christeen Era, Carmella Granado, Steve Miranda, Nancy Rapport, and Melissa Swire.

Reviewers of the manuscript devoted time, caring, and thoughtful attention to this work—and trusted that we would listen to their suggestions with "Learner ears!" I thank Derrick Allen, Kaitlyn Beaver, Nick Andrews, Jennifer Gass, Bev Kaye, Daranee Khanijou, Jeff Kulick, Ella Mason, Mark Maini, Vern Onketphon, Michele Roush, Jonathan Summers, and Jim Wilson.

I am blessed to be held by a caring community of friends, family, and colleagues. Their belief in me and this work are in the background of every page I write and every day of my life. They include Cecile Betit, Alan Briskin, Diane Chew, Janet Cho, Phil Cisneros, Mary Gelinas, Roy and Anne Goldberg, Selma and LeRoy Goldberg, David Grad, Karen Kaufman, Robert Kramer, Claire Lachance, Landmark Worldwide, Stewart Levine, Nancy Lopez, Jyoti Ma, John McAuley, Brad Pressman, Audrey Reed, Amy Ryan Rued, Melanie Smith, Jessica Ventura, Gen Kelsang Wangden, and Ruth Zaplin.

As always, those from whom I learn the most are my students and clients. Inquiry Institute's consulting engagements, Chief Question Officer® Certificate Programs, and QT workshops bring us clients and students who become our teachers, colleagues, and friends. They come from all over the United States as well as many other countries, including Brazil, Canada, China, Dubai, England, Mexico, Norway, the Philippines, Poland, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, and Turkey. I thank you all.

I am especially blessed to travel through this life with Ed Adams, my husband and muse. He brings creativity, love, and laughter into our lives every day.

Andrea would like to start by acknowledging Marilee for putting a name—Judger Mindset—to the inner voice she had been struggling with her whole life and giving her a set of tools—Question Thinking—to learn to master her mindset. The work of Question Thinking and your loving support as I learn to use these tools, Marilee, has helped me navigate some of my life's most painful and Judger-triggering experiences. Thanks to you, I made it through because you've taught me to live my life (mostly) in harmony with my Judger, who I like to call Gertrude.

I acknowledge Kim Aubry, the woman behind the women writing the workbook. Without your constant commitment and role modeling of Learner Living, this workbook never would have made it to the finish line.

I would also like to acknowledge my family for their support. I am deeply grateful to my partner Rob Miller who loves me even when I'm in the Judger Pit; to my sister Jennifer Lipton-O'Connor who put up with my Judger mischief for decades before I learned to reliably Switch (thanks for sticking with me, sis!); and to my parents Cindy and Dick Lipton who taught me at a young age to ask questions. They instilled in me a love of learning that is the foundation of both my happiness and my success.

I would also like to acknowledge my dear friends who encourage me to be my best Learner self every day. Jennifer and Darek Connole, I am forever grateful for everything you do as "Team Andrea." Magalie Renè, Amber J. Lawson, Ashley Lora, Liza Smalling, and David Hall my Masterheart Crew—you hold me accountable to constantly elevating myself as a coach and a human. Kathryn Witt, Laura Emanuel, and Remy Ramirez, you will forever be my sisters in transformation and role models for vulnerability, intimacy, and compassion. And finally, to my friends Aparna Mukherjee, Jeannine McHenry, Mike Curtis, and Michelle Hansbrough as well as my way-back OGs Gaetano Jones, Scott Tacorante, and Tamis Oshiro, can you believe I finally wrote a book? It's about time!

Finally, I would also like to acknowledge all the students of Question Thinking and everyone who reads this book for being courageous enough to take the journey to the distant mountain on the Choice Map that my nephew Tyler calls "Super Learner Mountain." I look forward to meeting you there!

About Marilee Adams

Dr. Marilee Adams is an award-winning author and pioneer in the fields of inquiry-based coaching, leadership, change, and organizational effectiveness. She is the founder and CEO of Inquiry Institute and the originator of the Question Thinking Approach. She is also a thought leader, consultant, executive coach, and keynote speaker. Marilee has been an adjunct professor at American University's Key Executive Leadership Program in the School of Public Affairs and is an affiliate instructor for Weatherhead Executive Education at Case Western Reserve University. Marilee is a faculty member at the Institute for Life Coach Training and Expedition Coaching and is an ACC with the International Coaching Federation. She is also a Fellow at the Institute for Social Innovation at Fielding Graduate University.

Marilee is the author of the internationally bestselling book *Change Your Questions, Change Your Life,* which is a #1 Amazon Bestseller in Business and Organizational Learning. She also wrote *Teaching that Changes Lives,* which brought Question Thinking and Marilee's love of inquiry into the world of education and won a Gold Medal IPPY Publishers Award. Marilee's first book, *The Art of the Question: A Guide to Short-Term Question-Centered Therapy* was lauded as a "seminal and breakthrough contribution to the field of psychotherapy." Marilee has published articles on the expert use of questions in coaching, business, relationships, and organizational transformation.

Question Thinking is known for transforming the "spirit of inquiry" into practical and powerful questioning and thinking skills and tools that make a difference throughout the world. Marilee's work is considered the gold standard for excellence in inquiry in the coaching profession and is widely used for leadership and organizational development.

Marilee is driven by an unrelenting passion for learning and making a difference with what she learns. She is happiest when people say things like: "Your work is so practical and it has changed my life—or my company, or my leadership, or my team, or even my marriage—Thank you!" She earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the Fielding Graduate Institute and her M.S.W. from Virginia Commonwealth University.

Marilee and her husband, artist, psychologist, and author Ed Adams, live in the river town and arts community of Lambertville, New Jersey.

Marilee is available for executive coaching, keynote presentations, consulting, coach training, and workshops (virtual and onsite). She loves "spreading the word" about the power of Learner inquiry to make a difference in all our lives. She would love to hear from you at Marilee.Adams@InquiryInstitute.com.

About Andrea F. Lipton

Andrea F. Lipton is an adult learning, instructional design, and leadership development expert with more than 25 years of experience creating and facilitating learning and development, mentoring, and coaching initiatives for Fortune 500 companies across an array of industries. At the Inquiry Institute, Andrea serves as the Senior Director of Learning where she partners with Dr. Marilee Adams to design and develop Question Thinking tools including the workbook you are now holding. Her thought leadership has also been featured in *Training Journal, Training Industry, People + Strategy,* and in the Harvard Business Publishing blog "Leading the Way."

In addition to her partnership with the Inquiry Institute, Andrea is the creator of the "Ways of Being That Work Toolkit" that helps individuals and organizations define the leader attributes that matter most to them. She publishes a bi-monthly video blog of the same title. Visit Andrea's LinkedIn profile at https://www.linkedin.com/in/aflipton/ to view her latest posts.

Andrea has held an array of leadership roles in learning and development for organizations including Harvard Business Publishing; the City of Los Angeles' Department of Transportation, where she served as a FUSE Corp Executive Fellow; and Ferrazzi Greenlight, a boutique firm that specializes in executive coaching and leadership development. She relaunched the corporate university for CBRE in the Americas and has led learning and development teams for companies including Arden Realty, a subsidiary of General Electric, and JPMorgan Chase.

Andrea earned a BA and an MA from Columbia University.

Andrea is available for executive coaching, consulting, and workshops (virtual and onsite). You can contact her at Andrea@InquiryInstitute.com.

About Inquiry Institute

Our mission is to help create a world of new thinkers inspired by open-minded, open-hearted questioning.

Leadership, engagement, communication, collaboration, coaching, and innovation are uniquely empowered by the Question Thinking™ (QT) system of tools and practices pioneered by Dr. Marilee Adams and the Inquiry Institute. Our team of coaches, facilitators, and consultants are experts at providing QT approaches and solutions so that individuals, teams, and organizations become more successful and satisfied in realizing their desired results.

We invite you to visit our website to explore free resources, including the Choice Map, a Change Your Questions Book Club, and information about joining our active Learner Community. On the website and on the following pages you can also learn about other Learner Resources (www.InquiryInstitute.com/LearnerResources) that can make a substantial, and often life-changing difference, wherever they are applied.

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We believe that the solutions to the world's problems will come from all of us, working at all levels: in our society, in our organizations, and in our own lives. Our publications and resources offer pathways to creating a more just, equitable, and sustainable society. They help people make their organizations more humane, democratic, diverse, and effective (and we don't think there's any contradiction there). And they guide people in creating positive change in their own lives and aligning their personal practices with their aspirations for a better world.

And we strive to practice what we preach through what we call "The BK Way." At the core of this approach is *stewardship,* a deep sense of responsibility to administer the company for the benefit of all of our stakeholder groups, including authors, customers, employees, investors, service providers, sales partners, and the communities and environment around us. Everything we do is built around stewardship and our other core values of *quality, partnership, inclusion,* and *sustainability.*

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We are grateful to our readers, authors, and other friends who are supporting our mission. We ask you to share with us examples of how BK publications and resources are making a difference in your lives, organizations, and communities at www.bkconnection.com/impact.

Dear reader,

Thank you for picking up this book and welcome to the worldwide BK community! You're joining a special group of people who have come together to create positive change in their lives, organizations, and communities.

What's BK all about?

Our mission is to connect people and ideas to create a world that works for all.

Why? Our communities, organizations, and lives get bogged down by old paradigms of self-interest, exclusion, hierarchy, and privilege. But we believe that can change. That's why we seek the leading experts on these challenges—and share their actionable ideas with you.

A welcome gift

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